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SWISS FAMILY MANHATTAN
REHEARSAL
MANDARIN IN MANHATTAN
THE ROMANY STAIN
CHIMNEYSMOKE
HASTA LA VISTA

BY CHRISTOPHER MORLEY



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BY CHRISTOPHER MORLEY



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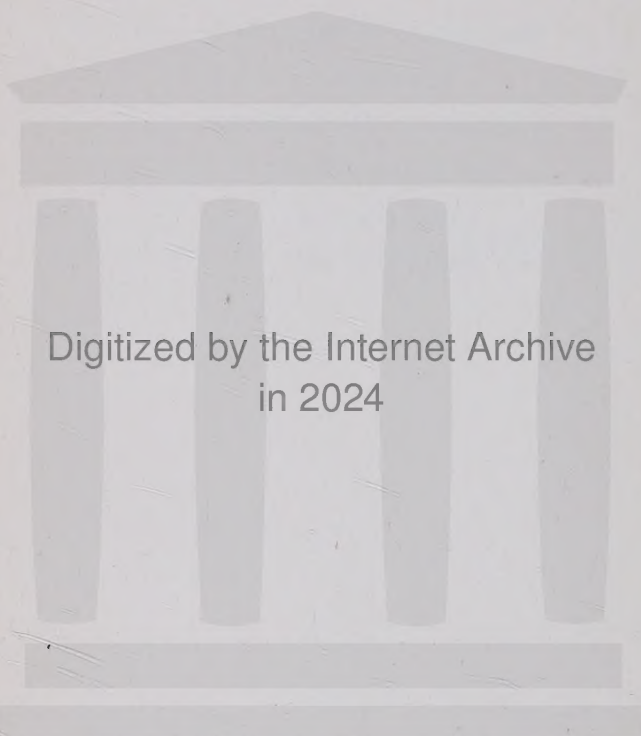
REHEARSAL

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SWISS FAMILY MANHATTAN

SWISS FAMILY MANHATTAN

I confess a special affection for this fable; perhaps partly for the comparison of Voltaire to an electric refrigerator (p. 159). Voltaire (and Ben Franklin too) would have enjoyed this freak, which is (I now realize) very 18th century in tone. That makes it extraordinarily contemporary, for our own era becomes more like the 18th century every day.

I believe the satire isolates for lucid examination some characteristic bacilli of American comedy, without ever losing its temper. It also exposes some of the secret humors of the lecture traffic, a theme which most writers are too canny to expose.

My favorite readers have been those who earnestly assured me that there is no such language as "Swiss."

I suppose the starting point of this thing was a windy winter day when with the great builder the late Colonel Starrett my brother and I climbed the naked framework of the pinnacle on the unfinished Empire State Building. In those days the topmost tower was always called the "Mooring Mast," ingenious publicity suggesting it as a point d'appui for Zeppelins. It was a series of platforms and girders connected only by ladders; an exhilarating but pavid experience. The story was written in the early summer of 1931, the family were away on holiday in Block Island and I was alone in the house with a sheepdog. Oliver Perry, a much-loved friend then in bad health, came out to cheer my tedium. He was the ideal guest: he stayed in bed in the mornings, allowed me to cook and serve his meals, which was great fun; and I compensated by reading the MS aloud to him as it proceeded. If he cackled a little, and Oliver didn't cackle easily, I felt we were on the right track. Oliver was himself a very Voltairean person: he fell hard for my heroine *Gazelle*, but he warned me that few readers would enjoy as I did the phrase about "High Coefficient of Muliebrity." He was right. No one ever noticed it.

I

How wonderful was that first day on the great airship. We left Geneva at lunch time, and by the middle of the afternoon we had accustomed ourselves to the novelty. From the slanting windows of the lounge we could look down on the beautiful blue and green pattern of Europe; it was strange to think that so fair an earth is vexed with so much political irritation. My good Gretchen suffered a little air-sickness from the unaccustomed motion, but that was not surprising; even on the lake steamers from Geneva to Lausanne I have known her to be quite prostrated. She lay down in our stateroom, and I gave her the latest report of the Subcommittee

on Opium, which I thought she would find soothing. The two boys were in an ecstasy, watching everything and following our course on the map. I was pleased to hear Fritz telling his little brother the principal products of the various towns and regions, and reflected that this voyage would teach them much geography. "And you particularly, Fritz," I said to him, "do well to make our holiday a source of improvement, for since you are sixteen I had to pay full fare for you. It is a pity we did not take this educational trip while you were both young enough to go at half-rate."

"Papa," he replied, "that would have been impossible; for, *alpha*, air travel had not at that time been sufficiently developed, and, *beta*, Otto was not then intelligent enough to profit by it."

I fear I was slightly nettled by the methodical tone of his statement, but as a lover of reason I was pleased to see the boy's argumentative powers so well trained.

As for myself, it is queer now to remember that I was in the happiest mood, delighted in our well-earned vacation, and without foreboding of any sort. We had left for this Ten Day Air Cruise on sudden impulse, but our modest baggage was neatly packed; Gretchen had not even forgotten the bicarbonate of soda and the syrup of figs that mean so much to a sedentary student. I felt definitely that the voyage marked an epoch in our lives, and cheerfully I paced the little glassed-in promenade deck. It was wrong, I thought, that we whose lives were spent in international affairs had never before travelled away from the lake of Geneva and could speak no language but Swiss. The world is a large place, I suddenly realized, and went in to encourage Gretchen by telling her that both for ourselves and the boys this trip would be amazingly instructive. She had fallen asleep, and the Opium pamphlet was lying unopened beside the berth, so I feared she was not well.

I waked her tenderly to ask if there was anything I could do.

When I resumed the even current of my thought, I found the promenade rather chilly. The evening was clouding over, and the air seemed surprisingly rough. The boys hailed me with joyous shouts because the barometer was falling and a storm was predicted over the Atlantic. They were eager to convey this news to their mother, but I managed to avert it by starting them on a game of checkers. Then I sat peacefully enough at a wicker table in one corner of the lounge, with a glass of our mild Geneva beer. I found myself reviewing our work at the League. To give you the background you will need for my strange story I must tell you briefly what I was thinking.

II

IT WAS a happy life among the dossiers. Even now I look back with twinges of homesickness toward that cheerful room of card-indexes and filing-cases where our tranquil work was carried on. As Chief of the Bureau of Available Reference I had access to all the confidential records of our gigantic organization, and it was my duty to see that all reports, pamphlets, and memoranda were properly classified and filed. Occasionally one of the stenographers, demoralized by that recurring excitability which I suppose is natural in young women, would misfile a series of documents; then, for an hour or so, a spasm of agitation fluttered our department. None of

us have forgotten the reprimand that came from the Higher Secretariat when, by an indexing error, reports on the Traffic in Unreclaimable Women were confused with the minutes on the Exportation of Hides and Skins. But fortunately these embarrassments were rare. Pamphlets can become a passion, and when there arrived on my desk, fresh and fragrant from the printer, a new batch of bulletins on the Œcumenical Patriarch in Constantinople, the Hydraulic Resources of the Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes, or the Commission to Delimit Upper Silesia, Gretchen and I would pace the room in an ecstasy.

My dear wife Gretchen was an ideal helpmate in this great work. Although her quiet domestic instincts were always paramount, now that the boys were in school the home duties were not so severe. I was able to get her a part-time job at headquarters, which satisfied her long-repressed zeal for secretarial pleasures. Indeed, her notes of the agenda of the Subsection

on Intellectual Coöperation were highly praised by Professor Gilbert Murray and Professor Einstein. We Swiss have always esteemed a buxom tranquillity as women's pleasantest trait, and with approaching middle age we believed ourselves to have outgrown the temperamental vagaries of youth. As the High Commission on Public Hygiene would say, we had standardized our biological products. Only once, I think, during our happy years at the League, did I feel it necessary to reproach her for what seemed an excess of levity. She was always a devotee of the moving pictures, and I believed that she and the boys were too often unsettled by visits to the cinema. When she suggested that she should make a trip to Rome for the opening of the International Educational Cinematographic Institute (which is in close liaison with the Committee on Intellectual Coöperation; its records will be found filed in the Artistic Relations Section, dossier I. I. C. 5A) I felt it was disingenu-

ous and had to put my foot down. But this little eccentricity had passed away, and we looked forward to many peaceful years together at our useful though plodding tasks. I was never so proud of her as when I would see her eyes brighten and her bosom swell over a new précis on the Saar Basin or the Possibility of Replacing the Persian Poppy by Other Crops. Like most of our fine Swiss women she had a very beautiful bosom. I used to regret that we had never had a daughter, to perpetuate Gretchen's generous feminine charms; it would have been pleasant, we used to say humorously, to call the child Agenda. But such thoughts were now presumably obsolete. Our two sturdy boys were a great pride to us. Fritz, of high-school age, was already of an inquiring turn of mind; he had won a school prize for an essay on the Use of Lantern Slides in International Relations. His habit, picked up in school, of codifying his arguments into subheads *alpha*, *beta*, *gamma*,

and so on, seemed to me to prove that he was destined to the high calling of an international pamphleteer. It was my hope to lead him gradually toward statistical interests, for in the Sub-section on Graphs and Budgets there will always be opportunity for trained men. At any rate, we looked forward confidently to his joining the work of the League, and when he spent his pocket money too rapidly I gave him as a birthday present that notable report, prepared by the Baltic Mixed Commission, on Double Taxation and Fiscal Evasion. Little Otto was still only a child of ten, and we had not yet concluded in what department of international collaboration he would find his niche.

I may not be tiresome in this matter, yet I shall convey to you the happy simplicity of our absorption. It is true that my work had made almost an agnostic of me, for a constant immersion in political and humanitarian pamphlets soon dries up the wellsprings of any faith in an

omniscient divine benevolence. While filing reports on the perplexities of Upper Silesia, the woes of Bulgarian refugees, the traffic in Obscene Publications, it became clear to me that only the patient and coördinated effort of humanity, not the assistance of any mystical Creator, would avail to solve our problems. This was the more regrettable since I had begun life as a Lutheran pastor and still, as a matter of habit, retained the black broadcloth garb of that persuasion. I hope this was no hypocrisy, but an obscure feeling that an international filing-clerk has his dignity to maintain. The natural piety characteristic of our Swiss people had not wholly expired in me, for when our records were all checked and in order, and we were unharassed by investigators insisting on access to the files, I used to find myself thanking God for so happy and fruitful a career. But this was an instinctive emotion rather than an intellectual credo. The devoted tasks of our daily routine were consolation enough.

So the time went by; and after years of patient application I had practically finished my book on the History of Human Reason. My theme was that human beings are governable by rational persuasion, and I had considered the course of idealism from Marcus Aurelius down to the newspaper writings of Calvin Coolidge and the establishment of a radio station at the Vatican. In fact, the text was complete and nothing remained to do but the compilation of the index. This was to be no mere abecedarian catalogue of items but a cross-referenced synthesis of the whole argument, an essay in itself. Long experience in the Secretariat together with my native Swiss methodism fitted me for an achievement unique in the realm of philosophical indexing. I looked forward to the pleasures of this final task as the crown of all my labor. The printer was clamoring for the manuscript, for it was a time of trade depression and the copy would keep his typesetters busy for a long time

to come; but I did not wish to part with it until I had minutely reread the whole text and drawn off on cards an alphabetical analysis of its contents. I needed several peaceful days to study and arrange these cards at leisure. At that very moment we saw the advertisement of the Air Cruise. Gretchen said we had earned a vacation, and this was our opportunity. The precious cards were with us, in a small briefcase of their own. I had even sacrificed an extra suit for their sake, as our baggage was limited in weight. I expected, in the airy seclusion of our voyage, to finish the work. I locked the manuscript away at the office, pending my return with the completed index.

III

IN SPITE of a secret uncertainty of poise we sat resolutely for dinner in the airship's beautiful saloon. Gretchen looked a trifle pale, but I believed that the excellent food would do her good; besides, it was already paid for. The dining room was gay and colorful, the furnishings all of the lightest materials but smartly decorated with mathematical fantasies. "See, my treasure," I said, "how well is everything planned. Not even the food is heavy: a consommé, a filet of trout from our own Lake Lemman, a delicate cutlet from the grill with soufflé potatoes, themselves like little balloons. Then a crisp salad, a breast of pheasant with jelly, a

fruit sherbet, a dainty shaving of cream cheese. These will not tax your stomach."

Her eyes filled with tears. Always loyal to our accustomed thrift, I believe my poor darling was grieved at the thought of not being able to do justice to a meal which was included in the price of our tickets.

Otto.—What good will it do Mamma if she eats it and loses it again immediately afterward?

Fritz.—No good at all; the double traffic will only unsettle her entrails, and the resources of the Skyways Gesellschaft will be needlessly squandered.

Father.—My dear boys, in theory I applaud your bringing judgment to bear upon the problem, but I think you speak with undue coarseness. Do not embarrass your mother by such physical allusions.

During the meal it was my desire to keep our minds on improving topics. "Remarkable!" I

exclaimed. "Here we sit in what is to all appearance a lively restaurant, with electric lights, music played by radio, and waiters serving cocktails, and yet as a matter of fact I suppose we are a thousand feet in the air somewhere above Barcelona, a city which is even larger than Madrid and presents very interesting political and economic problems."

"It isn't safe to fly as low as 1,000 feet," said little Otto. "The altimeter in the lounge says 5,000."

Fritz.—As for Barcelona, we are not going that way at all. We're over the north coast of Spain; in fact, we're getting to the Bay of Biscay.

Mother.—The Bay of Biscay? That's where the bad weather always is.

I went to the window to make sure, and the boy was right. In the gathering dusk I could just see the dark expanse of the Atlantic streaked with foam, my first glimpse of that historic

body of water which has caused so much discomfort, both political and personal. I insisted on Gretchen sharing this thrill and assisted her to the side of the room to look out. She made no comment, but long companionship enables one to read thoughts, and I could see that she was remembering the sunlit quiet of the Lake of Geneva seen from our snug villa at Eaux-Vives. The wind made a curious wailing sound outside our huge hull, and it occurred to me that this frail and complicated fabric was perhaps symbolic of humanity itself, adrift in unbelievable space and dependent only on its own ingenuity. As we returned to the table the ship gave a curious trembling lurch. There was a distant smash of crockery, and Gretchen looked at me oddly. "We've been seduced by an advertisement," she said.

I remembered the beautiful poster we had seen in the window of the travel agency, offering this Off-Season Cruise at reduced rates. *Look Down*

on the *New World*, it said, and showed an airliner floating through sunny blue, with passengers in sport costume pacing in a kind of glass conservatory.

"Let us have a demi of champagne," I suggested.

"The more we eat and drink," remarked Fritz, "the better for the ship. The buoyancy gets greater as the supplies are consumed."

"Yebbut the food still weighs the same inside you," Otto objected. Although so young, Otto was a persistent arguer; he rarely assented without reservation to anything his brother said, and so often began his sentences with "Yes, but"—which he pronounced Yebbut—that the word had become his nickname.

I saw at once where this argument was tending and cut them short by ordering a half-bottle of champagne. This was an unusual luxury for us; we allowed the boys to have a sip, and it did us all good.

"I am particularly glad," I said, "that this voyage will give us a glimpse of America. However superficial, it will be instructive. Reports are conflicting, but I gather that in that immense country they have achieved on a grand scale the same——"

"How big is immense?" asked Otto.

Mother.—Very big indeed. You must not interrupt Papa like that.

Father.—My dear, the child is right. It is a father's duty to use language more precisely. Literally, immense means immeasurable.

Otto.—America can be measured, can't it?

Fritz.—Sure, it's 2,500 miles wide.

Otto.—Then it's not immense.

I was happy, even at the expense of parental infallibility, to encourage this little exercise in clear thinking. "You see," I explained, "anything used as constantly as language is, especially in this family, must necessarily be flexible. We do not always use words in their exact

etymological meanings. But as I was saying, in the United States men have achieved on a grand scale the same scientific orderliness that we Switzers cherish in our own little federation. Humanity, my dears, is perfectible. In that broad land, severed from the tragic rivalries of Europe, man has probably been able to create a civilization more rational, prosperous, imaginative, than our poor old continent can show. This vista we now have of the turbulent Atlantic makes me realize why we Europeans sometimes misjudge the Americans. Only the wilder and bolder spirits of their country are likely to traverse so huge and costly an ocean for pleasure. Let us not judge them by their tourists. The great mass of American citizens, biding at home and attending their affairs, are probably quiet and frugal people like ourselves."

"I want to see a gunman," shouted Otto, whose ideas of America had been deformed by the cinema.

"Ride him, cowboy!" exclaimed Fritz, seizing his plate as the great vessel canted steeply to one side, and the scream of the wind outside drowned for a moment the steady hum of the motors. Gretchen clung to the edge of the table.

"Paul, Paul," she gasped, "I feel so ill."

I helped her to our stateroom. When I returned to the table, thinking it would calm my nerves to finish the champagne, the boys had already done so and had gone to the lounge to look at magazines. Perhaps I should not have made a point of the matter, but when I saw that the journal before them was *La Vie Parisienne* I was annoyed. I called them aside, not liking to admonish them before the other passengers, and was relieved to notice that an American business-man took up the magazine as soon as they laid it down.

"Now, boys," I said, "I do not wish to begin our much-anticipated little holiday by finding fault, but do you think it was courteous—to say

nothing of its effect on your health—to finish the wine in your father's absence?"

Fritz.—But, Papa, we thought, *alpha*, that you were not coming back; and *beta*, that the glasses would spill and it would be wasted.

"And, *gamma*, we liked it," cried Otto in his most impudent manner. "It makes our knees go twitter." Suddenly he collapsed on the floor as the ship tilted, and burst into tears. "I'm frightened. I wish I was back in Geneva."

I myself was secretly alarmed at the growing violence of the storm, and some of my old Lutheran pieties had come back to me in a surprising way. "Remember," I said to them, "God is with you wherever you are; and particularly where you're going now."

"Where is that, Papa?" asked Fritz.

"To bed," I said sternly.

I had thought to spend the evening quietly collating my index-cards, but the movement was too disconcerting. Uneasily I watched the rain

driving against the windows of the lounge, saw officers pass to and from the navigating quarters and tried to read in their faces whether this tempest was exceptional. As I sat at a small table with my cards spread out before me, the American business-man came and sat beside me, asking me to translate some of the witticisms of *La Vie Parisienne*. Fortunately it was impossible, for we had very little language in common. "But it doesn't matter," he said genially; "I guess I get the idea." He supposed, from the cards, that I was playing some new kind of solitaire, and remarked that he, as a travelling salesman, knew some good card games. I explained my occupation as best I could, and we got into a halting conversation, in which I finally gathered that he was assuring me that the League of Nations was a chimera. I tried to convince him that he would not think so if he could see our filing system, but communication was difficult. As the motion of the ship grew more noticeable,

he became very sallow; a vapor collected on his tortoise-shell glasses, and *La Vie Parisienne* slid from his hand. Before I went to my berth I managed to slip the magazine into my briefcase with the index-cards. My intention was to drop it quietly overboard the next day, before it did any harm. How strangely that small episode affected our future lives!

IV

OF THE storm I have no skill to speak. Towards midnight it had increased to hurricane force; through the flimsy partitions of the cabins we could hear the groans and cries of alarm of the other passengers, among which the voice of our frightened Otto was predominant, but the American salesman was a good second, imploring the radio operator to send his orders by wireless to the home office before the ship foundered. Sleep was impossible. The world had become one scream of wind in which the huge envelope of the airship was cruelly racked. I learned from our steward that the commander had tried to hold the vessel steady against the

blow, but that a sudden shift of wind had careened her dangerously on one side, and then the failure of an engine compelled him to yield to the power of the gale. The bulky craft, rolling hideously, was being blown sideways farther and farther from her course.

I tried to comfort my wife, but she would not be satisfied until we had all dressed and the boys joined us, crawling on hands and knees to our stateroom where we huddled in misery. My poor Gretchen suggested that I should read aloud from the Bible, and indeed the 27th chapter of Acts would have been appropriate to our case; but it had never occurred to me to bring the Book with us. I looked about in the lounge for the ship's copy, but the steward said that the American salesman had taken it to his room and would not give it up. One thing I shall never forget. The radio in the lounge had been left on, to divert the passengers' minds, and by reason of the difference in time it was now uttering,

in the midst of this tempest and anxiety, the dialogue of some blackface comedians which the Americans are accustomed to listen to at their dinner hour. I was never able to hear those voices afterward without the most horrid agitation and nausea. It was a relief when the antennæ were torn away by the gale and the machine became silent.

So, like my namesake the apostle Paul, we "wished for the day." I cannot describe in detail the misery of those hours, which remain a confused horror in memory. Dawn broke in a gray abyss of roaring vapor, where torn wreaths of cloud and rain went by us like smoke. The ship seemed to shriek aloud in her agony. I have no idea how long it lasted. I believe that then, and for days afterward, we were crazed by the terror of our experience; I can only account for some of my subsequent impressions by the fact that my mind was warped by fantasy. The boys lay on the floor, too ill to argue, but Gretchen

was on the verge of hysterics. "Dictate to me!" she cried at last. "I don't mind dying if I can take dictation." Distracted as I was, I nerved myself to comply. The mental concentration necessary in stenography is almost a hypnosis, and it was pathetic, amid our deadly peril, to see the calming influence exerted on my good wife by this familiar occupation. Her skilful fingers flew over the notebook as she took down some rigmarole which I uttered in the hope of stupefying her. It is a pity that the Subcommittee on Paranoias could not have had access to these notes; it would have been a valuable psychological document, for she took down everything I said: a mixture of incoherent prayers for our survival, encouragements to the retching children, and a memorandum to the Committee on Airways urging the abolition of aërial navigation. But even then I did not realize the fullness of our danger until the American salesman appeared at our door with a green and ghastly

face and gibbered at me, handing me a large black volume. I thought at first that he was lending me the ship's Bible for consolation, but finally he made it plain that it was his order-book. He wished me, in case disaster overtook him, to take care of his record of transactions on the Continent in behalf of some confection called Ginger Cubes. "Thank God I forwarded the confirmations by regular mail," he said, and collapsed in a paroxysm.

I made what preparations I could for the end. The fury of the wind had ripped open the outer envelope of the ship, great rags of fabric lashed wildly along her side, and the gale howled in the exposed girders. With rending crashes I could feel her tortured frame gradually breaking up, she quivered soggily and sank lower in the screaming air. We had been instructed in the use of the emergency balloon-rafts, small pneumatic pontoons filled with gas which would keep several people afloat in air for a long time. In

such violent elements the chance was pitifully small, and our faithful steward tried to dissuade me, but I was wild with despair. Crawling through the reeling corridor I struggled to the lee side, dragging Gretchen and the boys after me. I cut one of the rafts almost loose from its fastening and lashed my dear ones to it. With a double turn of cord I made secure my briefcase containing the precious index-cards. Then I remembered the salesman's order-book, which I regarded as a sacred trust. A curious impulse of obstinacy drove me to attempt one last service to the unfortunate stranger who, only a few hours before, had ridiculed my idealism. Gretchen and the boys implored me not to risk it, but I groped again to the interior.

Plainly the airship was doomed. Already a huge fissure had opened across the living quarters where her frame had buckled. Looking upward into her huge crisscross of beams and struts I could see men clinging in the network like

flies in a web. I heard one engine still exploding spasmodically. The American lay in the passageway, and I tried in vain to rouse him. A sickening shiver of the hull and cries from the navigating room warned me not to delay. Now it was everyone for himself. I seized the salesman's book where it lay on the cabin floor and fought my way back to the raft. I had just gained my place and thrust the book into my briefcase when a vast convulsion shook the great dirigible. Even above the booming gale I could hear the fracture of snapping metals. As she staggered in the blinding squalls I cut the last mooring that held us. We clung desperately to the frail pontoon. It hovered an instant in an eddy, and then was whipped away in the storm.

V

How long we drifted, or above what wastes of sea, I had no idea. The light raft was blown like paper on those wild torrents of air; blinded by rain and fog, swooning in helpless despair, we clung half-conscious to our tossing support. To what remote regions of earth or sky we were being carried I could not guess. I had no compass, and all sense of direction was lost in that whirlwind of tempest. In a small locker there were hard biscuits and a bottle of brandy, but my fingers were too numb to loosen the cork. After hours of scudding, darkness again closed round us; the raft seemed to float a little more steadily, but we were too tired and giddy to care. Pros-

trated in misery, I was even too wretched to reproach myself for having prolonged our sufferings. Then, with a fearful shock, our vehicle collided with some massive obstruction. The gas-pontoons were punctured by the blow and collapsed with a whistling report, the flimsy framework of the raft shattered about us in fragments. We were catapulted sprawling into what seemed the thick branches of an enormous tree. Only the automatic impulses of self-preservation enabled us to continue the weary struggle. We crept feebly among a tangle of black limbs, and by sense of touch alone pushed and pulled one another away from dangerous edges. Gretchen and the boys collapsed in stupor. My briefcase, strapped about me like a knapsack, had preserved the brandy bottle from breakage. With the cessation of our dizzy flight I felt less ill, and was able to extract the cork. I forced a few drops of spirit into the mouths of my helpless charges, and took some myself.

Apparently, by some incalculable chance, we were the sole relics of the catastrophe, but I could not believe we would long survive. The gale had moderated, but the night was thick, my spectacles had been blown away in the scramble to leave the perishing airship, and I could only dimly discern the ramified outlines of our lofty eyrie. In some fantastic vegetable growth high above an unknown wilderness what hope could there be of safety? Even in my bewildered condition I seemed to hear, from far below, the sounds of carnivorous life, the roar and scream of pitiless beasts, the whistle of birds of prey. More alarming still, even through the wet foggy gloom there was a vague distant glow, perhaps a forest conflagration or the camp-fires of savage tribes. I sat nervously in the angle of two limbs which seemed of incredible hardness and rigidity, and recollections of old books of travel came to my mind. I remembered that in the forests of South America there are huge trees of

very hard timber. I concluded that we were probably roosting in a quebracho forest in the trackless Brazils, and offered this thought in the hope of arousing the interest of my companions. But they were too exhausted to reply. Clutching my sodden briefcase, and with my foot painfully asleep where Gretchen clung desperately to my ankle, I waited helplessly for daylight. I tried to remember by what ingenuities lost explorers sustain themselves in the wilderness.

Dimly, as dawn broke, the realities of our plight became apparent. We were in a jungle far more terrible than I had ever imagined. I drew back amazed from the gulf that yawned below us. The place in which we huddled was the topmost lattice-work of a tree of steel perched above a sheer cliff of stone mountain-high. A smooth precipice of a thousand feet stretched down into the pale mist below; in that cloudy morning we could not even see the earth.

On every side were other stony pinnacles, fantastically shaped in pyramids and ledges; narrow gorges and defiles ran intersecting in patterns of rock. The purpose of the strange erection in which we had been cast I could not guess; it was an intricate jumble of metal beams and platforms, tall enough in itself to horrify the timid. I gazed astonished upon the monstrous panorama. I thanked God that we were hardy Swiss, accustomed to mountaineering and Alpine heights. Though I was rather near-sighted without my spectacles, my vision was perfectly adequate for the close work of climbing, and I felt in some measure relieved that we were so high above this strange wilderness, out of reach of its more dangerous denizens.

I expressed this thought aloud in thankfulness, but then the full sorrow of our fate came in grievous realization. For when Gretchen and the boys roused themselves from their uneasy slumber I could see that their sufferings had

broken down some of the delicate fibres of reason. Their first desire, on seeing our situation, was to climb down into the jungle below, where they believed we should be safe. They insisted that we must be within reach of civilization; that the natives might be friendly, and food and shelter easy to procure. Little did their tender natures, accustomed to constant care and protection, realize the cruel possibilities of a strange wilderness. We were unarmed, and without equipment except for the briefcase and a few fathoms of rope left in the fragments of the raft. Plainly it was my duty to keep to myself my sad consciousness of their pathetic delusion. "Courage!" I said. "Father knows best." My first task was obviously to reconnoitre the terrain, leaving Gretchen and the boys behind in safety. Fortunately the weather had turned fair, and the rising sun was beginning to warm the air, so the problem of shelter could be postponed for a little. But both hunger and thirst were already pressing.

The platform on which we found ourselves was of considerable extent, but to guard against accident I thought it wise to rope the weaker members together. Fritz, however, begged so eagerly to accompany me in exploration that I could not deny him, and as the boy was strong and active he might be of much help. So I carefully noosed little Otto to his mother, and tied the end of the cord to the steel framework. My poor Gretchen, still dazed from our terrible hardships, looked piteously at me, but I persuaded her that this was the only possible course to take. I urged her to avoid vertigo by keeping in the middle of the platform, and suggested that to while away our absence she might rearrange the index-cards in order, since they had become mixed up in the briefcase. I knew that this familiar occupation would keep her happily employed. We embraced fondly, and I briefly commended our little group to the attention of the Supreme Being.

"Here in the topmost branches of our Giant Tree," said I to my wife, "you and Otto will be quite safe, while Fritz and I will endeavor to ascertain the nature of the country. It is undoubtedly some region of North America, for I recall from my reading that only there do the trees grow so high."

"How high is it?" asked little Otto, leaning over the edge with enthusiasm.

"Our clever Fritz will figure that out for us by trigonometry," I said, and began to explain how by driving pegs in the ground and a simple triangulation it would be possible to reckon the altitude of our eyrie.

"Never mind the altitude," said Gretchen, a little sharply, as she towed Otto back from the brink. "The first question is, When do we eat? Shall I make out a shopping list for you, or will you just bring back whatever occurs to you?"

I felt that this ironical tone was untimely, and was further annoyed by Otto shouting at us,

as Fritz and I clambered dangerously down the labyrinth of steel, "Mamma says, don't forget your gluten bread." At a time when I needed all my self-confidence it was a mistake to remind me of a slight diabetic tendency that is hereditary in Lutheran families. Such little passages of human vexation, more trying than the stings of mosquitoes, are rarely mentioned in the memoirs of explorers.

The different levels of this great skeleton were linked together by rude ladders, so evidently we were not the first creatures that had ascended there; it made me shudder to think how wild must be the life of a country where men would build a refuge or watch-tower a quarter-mile high. However, I said nothing to Fritz of my alarm, and he himself was so much exhilarated by our adventure that he prattled merrily. I was glad to see him revive so quickly after our horrid dangers, and indeed the prospect was an extraordinary sight. On every side, farther than

my eye could distinguish, extended the stony clefts and sierras, sometimes tipped with floating plumes of steam, suggesting either fires for cooking or sacrifice, or perhaps that these peaks were of volcanic origin.

Fritz.—Surely, Papa, we cannot be lost in a wilderness as you suppose. For, *alpha*, this great edifice shows all the evidences of careful plan; and, *beta*, now that the morning brightens I see that the paths or trails on the ground are laid out in definite patterns.

Father.—My boy, after the experiences we have been through I am not disposed to take anything for granted. You know from your natural history that ants and bees, and sometimes even quite fierce animals, show in their affairs a miraculous semblance of order. Until we know the character of the inhabitants, let us not presume too rashly.

We were encouraged to see that on the narrow ledges of this curious turret were various

planks, tarpaulins, piles of sand, and other builders' materials which would be useful in constructing a shelter for ourselves. But now as the day advanced we began to see signs of activity in the framework below us. What I at first took to be large apes were clambering about with slow but very effective agility, balancing undisturbed at gruesome heights, hoisting and swinging great branches. Fritz, with his sharper eyesight, insisted that they were workmen, but I thought it wise to avoid close contact with them. We donned two pairs of overalls which we found lying in a corner, and so clad we were indistinguishable from the anthropoids and were able to move about unremarked. I observed these creatures with interest. They were mostly of a large blond type; their language was unknown to me, but Fritz, who is clever at the tongues, overheard cries which he thought were not unlike English but pronounced in a difficult patois. But as his studies in that language had been

limited to translating passages from Addison and Goldsmith he was not certain. There seemed to be a strong element of jocularly in their communications, for they laughed frequently; perhaps relieved to be so far removed from the terrors of the ground, whence (as we could plainly hear) rose a constant and tumultuous uproar. That their tastes in humor were primitive I divined from certain rough drawings on plastered walls where they were working. I was at pains to avert young Fritz's attention from these by tactful distractions.

Partly by prudence, partly by exhaustion, we did not on this first expedition penetrate into the main trunk of the Giant Tree but remained in the upper crevices of its iron foliage. As the forenoon advanced we began to suffer severely from hunger and thirst. By good fortune we espied in the angle of a girder some distance below two tin buckets which looked as though they might contain food. I was loath to commit a lar-

ceny, but necessity knows no restraint. Fritz and I put our heads together, and he remembered a scene in some moving picture where the comedian was embarrassed by his woollen underwear being unravelled into a ball of yarn. I was wearing a fine rugged Jaeger union suit which Gretchen had thought appropriate for an air voyage; by carefully unweaving one leg of this garment I was able to produce a string long enough for our purpose. Fritz fortunately had a safety pin, and with this as a hook we fished cautiously for our lunch. The anthropoids, busy at their tasks, did not notice, and we were able to draw up the prize. To our great pleasure we found that the buckets contained sandwiches and pie and a bottle of cold coffee.

"Now, Papa," said Fritz, "you will not again say that going to the cinema does not have its advantages."

Mindful of those we had left behind, we began the return climb, but as we made our way

up the precarious ladders a shout sounded from below. Our theft had been discovered, and to our dismay one of the anthropoids started upward after us, roaring vehemently. We made the best speed we could, but we were both weary and unpractised. The creature gained on us rapidly. We saw the faces of Gretchen and Otto looking down anxiously from the edge of our lofty retreat. When we gained their level the angry pursuer was only one stage behind us. There was no time to unfasten the ladder and draw it up out of his reach; already his huge hands were advancing on the rungs. I prepared to defend myself, expecting nothing better than death in the grasp of this infuriated gorilla, but a curious thing happened. In the warm noon air a strong aroma of cognac exhaled from our platform. When the enemy's angry face rose to the top of the ladder his expression suddenly changed, and he sniffed deeply. He uttered exclamations evidently of a pious nature, and di-

vining what it was that had mollified him I made signs suggesting the barter of our brandy bottle for the two buckets of lunch. He assented readily, seeming to think it an advantageous exchange, and retired to his mates in excellent humor.

I learned afterward that Gretchen, worried lest the little Otto should catch cold in his damp clothes, had stripped him and rubbed him vigorously with brandy. These anthropoids, it appears, are great lovers of ardent spirits; I thought with grief of the fine stock of liquors in the airship, which would now have been so precious to ingratiate ourselves with the natives. Looking down we could see them far below, passing the bottle among themselves, uttering cries of astonishment and looking towards us. They even made gestures of a friendly sort, and we were greatly relieved to find them so civilized.

"See, boys," I said, "how the protective in-

stinct of a mother, acting blindly for her young, has proved our salvation."

Gretchen screamed, I thought at first from emotion at my sentiment. Then I saw that little Otto, dizzy from the fumes of brandy on his person, had slipped over the edge and was dangling at the end of the rope. Fortunately it held, and we hauled him up safely.

I thought it wise to unfasten the topmost ladder and pull it up to the platform, to safeguard against any surprise. We sat down then and enjoyed our meal with relish, after which we lay down for repose.

VI

WE AWOKE refreshed late in the afternoon, and as the anthropoids seemed to have departed I set at once about building a shelter, our most immediate necessity. As I have said, much miscellaneous material was scattered about the various floors of our pinnacle, but the labor of hauling it up the ladders was extreme. However, by sunset we had pitched a little tent of tarpaulin at one corner of the platform, the sides stoutly fenced with planks so that there was no danger of rolling off. In the course of these efforts I had got as far down as the summit of the cliff proper, and there discovered many amazements. The huge structure was honeycombed with thousands

of rooms; I could not conceive how there would ever be enough inhabitants to fill it, unless perhaps it was intended as a place of refuge for a whole tribe in time of calamity. I believed that in this extensive labyrinth we might live almost indefinitely without being discovered. But for the present it seemed safer to stay where we were.

This great Gibraltar appeared to be well watered: we found practical plumbing on the top level of the cliff, and running springs in little basins of some white stone. There was also a wooden booth, apparently for the use of workmen, well stocked with fruit, biscuits, candies, and small packets of nuts. I realize that in this narrative I expose myself to serious criticism, and probably much of our conduct was not in accordance with the pacific principles of the Society of Nations; but there was no alternative. Someone had left a large monkey-wrench lying on the floor, with this I was able to force the

padlock of the storeroom, and we filled our buckets with provisions. A meal consisting largely of salted peanuts and small sweetmeats was what Fritz and Otto most enjoyed, but I feared that these would prove unsettling as a steady diet.

The evening was clear and mild, and though weary enough from our exertions we did not omit to say a family grace for having been spared in such strange circumstances. Gretchen, with her fine domestic touch, had already given our humble nest a homelike appearance. We had strips of canvas to rest on, the spare piece of rope was neatly coiled, and I had saved the monkey-wrench as a possible weapon. The boys fell early asleep, but my wife and I sat at the edge of the platform to survey the magnificent scene. Innumerable lights brightened the sheer walls of stone below us; even the sky itself was rosily tinged by these human fires, while a brilliant beacon whirled a white pencil of light in

steady rotation across the dark. It was hard not to believe that the region must be civilized.

"How much more severe," I said, "are the labors of practical pioneers than the calculations of statesmen. This expedition will be even more instructive than we imagined. Thrown on our unaided resources, to wrestle with nature and wring an existence out of the stark wilderness—yes" (my enthusiasm mounted as the vision enlarged in my mind), "perhaps to reclaim it from savagery: what a bulletin that would be for the Committee on Mandates!"

But Gretchen was already asleep.

I spent the night with my briefcase as pillow. Our first adventure in the morning was a return visit from the climbing workmen. Several of them were gathered on the landing below our camp, shouting up. As the ladder was raised they could not easily reach us, but I judged it prudent to be cordial in demeanor. They made signs which seemed to indicate a desire to repeat the

previous exchange, but we had no more brandy. I was anxious, fearing that this disappointment would anger them; to gain time I tried to convey to them by gestures that it is most unwholesome to drink brandy until after lunch at the earliest. I do not feel that I have any real talent for pantomime, but by pointing at the sun, shaking my head, and imitating the action of drinking I at least offered a spectacle which set our boys into fits of mirth. Little Otto began imitating my gestures with ingenious drollery, and the anthropoids themselves began to laugh. Then it occurred to me (remembering their drawings) to throw down the copy of *La Vie Parisienne* which was still in the briefcase. I did so, and they seemed pleased. It went from hand to hand, they discussed it earnestly together, and retired to their occupations. Thus, I thought, do the simple by-products of European culture show themselves useful in unexpected ways. I consoled my conscience by the thought that at least the text of the journal was illegible to them.

Gretchen, who had seen me rummage something from the briefcase, was much disturbed, imagining at first that I was tossing away a portion of my manuscript or the index-cards, so I explained the truth. But I did not wish the children to suppose that this was merely an incident for mirth. "Consider, my dears," said I, "there is a philosophy to be drawn from this episode. Among these people, as among the vulgar everywhere, a passion for strong liquor and a passion for lascivious journalism are paramount, and it is sad to think that whoever undertakes to supply these commodities will always prosper."

Little Otto desired to know what was the meaning of lascivious, but we changed the subject to that of breakfast.

By these two fortunate chances we had gained the approval of the anthropoids, so much so that they often saluted us in cheery or familiar fashion as they went about their hazardous

movements; but I knew that this could not endure. We had roused in their rude bosoms a false expectancy which was bound to make trouble later.

My mind was concerned with this problem as we made our morning meal of those trivial confections we had brought up from below. Each of them, as we learned from Fritz's translation of the labels, was warranted to abound in vital principle, impart vigor and ambition, keep the teeth from decay and purge the most sluggish intestine. Among them I noticed the identical lozenges for whose world-wide distribution our fellow-passenger had perished, and I ate one, but only one, in respect for his memory. As I studied the alluring wrappers in which the sweets were enclosed, it struck me that some system of self-hypnosis was operative among their perpetrators: for if the virtues claimed were really so, there was surely no reason why a man should ever eat honest beefsteak and pota-

toes but might better sustain life on fermented chocolate. Yet, I know not whether by reason of this sweet and spicy diet, or on account of the bracing air of our high bellevue, it is a fact that I felt thrillingly alert and experimental. I had inklings of prowess such as I had not experienced in many years. Subsequent observations have led me to believe that students of that country have not sufficiently attributed its paradoxical behaviors to the effects of its bewildering climate. At any rate I determined to examine the land itself. I was uneasy at leaving the family behind, but it was necessary. Enjoining Fritz to keep strict watch over the safety of the nest and the briefcase, I clambered downward on my perilous mission.

VII

THE overalls and monkey-wrench were a perfect disguise: everyone supposed me one of the anthropoids and paid no attention. It is true that my rich mustard beard made me look somewhat foreign, for in this country beards are rare, partly on account of the great capital invested in the razor and soap industries; and partly on account of an excessive deference to the ticklishness of women. They are worn chiefly by doctors, as delicate reassurance to the husbands of their patients. But if anyone looked at me suspiciously, all that was necessary was to pretend to be tinkering something with the wrench, and all doubts were allayed. For not only do these

people have the greatest veneration for tools of all sorts, but also their streets, buildings, plumbings, radios, mechanical fixtures, are continually being torn up, down, or apart, altered, adjusted, and repaired. Consequently anyone in overalls and with a kit of tools has unquestioned entrée everywhere.

To reach the bottom of the great building was in itself no small task. After lowering myself down the seventeen stages of the metal superstructure I found a series of stairways and began plodding diligently toward the ground; I suppose I had gone nearly halfway, and was already leg-weary, when I saw a number of workmen pushing into an elevator. I followed them, hoping to shorten the journey, but it was going in the wrong direction, and in a few seconds I found myself again at the top.

But at last, after patient persistences, I reached the street. How can I describe the astounding spectacle? In the clear dazzle of an

autumn forenoon I stood at the intersection of two broad boulevards. Above and behind me rose the huge cliff from which I had emerged, so tall that without my glasses the crest was veiled in myopic blue. Up the smooth slope of a gentle grade the windows of innumerable shops were scoured with sunshine and glittered like crystal. From side to side the streets were filled with a roaring sequence of vehicles which flowed spasmodically in a monotone of exploding gases. Like great beasts under rein and spur they rolled, wove in and out, paused panting with suppressed power. If delayed more than a few instants one, more ill-tempered than the rest, would utter a yelp of annoyance, and this was taken up by the whole pack, braying in gusts of impatience. Suddenly, with a common scream of exultation, all were unleashed and sprang furiously forward. Yet, as there were two full streams of traffic, pushing in opposite directions, the net result seemed to cancel completely. I

divined presently that this was not merely a parade of power for the benefit of the fuel industries, but an unconscious tidal phenomenon which reversed itself a few hours later. A great part of the day was thus spent in this reciprocal displacement, with no more serious result than a great deal of annoyance and fatigue. These people have a passion for continual movement and a strong distaste for work; to which end the upper classes contrive to live as far as possible from their place of employment and can while away a great deal of their time in congenial going to and fro. In spite of the obvious difficulty of crossing the highway, thousands of volatile pedestrians seemed as impatient to reach the other side as if their lives depended on it; as indeed they often did. When I saw an elderly matron skip deftly away from a gleaming fender of death, I fell upon my knees in prayer for her escape, but I saw the eye of a gendarme upon me and hastily pretended to be doing something

to a hydrant. It was in this way, with my invaluable wrench, that I learned the secret of obtaining a drink of water on the streets.

So down the deep channel this flood of hot metal came glittering in heavy sluice, rolling, heaving, tossing flakes of sunlight upon a turbid fume of blue vapor. Occasional venturers, caught in a riffle, leaped like frisking trout or poised watchfully in small eddies. It was long before I dared attempt to reach the other shore, and I wondered how I would ever convoy my family on such a crossing. Would it be best to rope them together, or to attempt a bridge with impromptu cantilevers?

But the natives had no such tremors. Apparently careless of life they waded into the stream of traffic; now here, now there, with agile bravado, they darted across the rumbling spate. Their eyes were bright with wary eagerness. Danger was the god of the scene. Danger was the element they lived in. Under these colossal

solids of geometry, in this highway of their mysterious affairs, it pulsed in brilliant horror. It pressed upon the senses, its victims gloried in it. Flags rippled against pure sky, celebrating the triumphant continuity of being. Behind plate-glass panes were all the glammers of surplus merchandise. I thought with relief that my dear wife was safe in lofty seclusion. Who could answer for a woman's sanity let loose among such cunning temptations and the huzza of merchants that it was her patriotic duty to keep her husband's salary in circulation? I learned afterward that this was a period of commercial deflation, when these people had suddenly discovered that they were not necessarily and permanently the spoiled children of God. Upon which their instinctive conclusion was that in that case there was no God at all. Their prophets and medicine men were busy reassuring them, some saying that there must be more faith in God, others that there must be less faith in In-

stalment Buying, but these quick-witted primitives were beginning to be suspicious. Was that why there seemed to me a sombre undertone in that vast tumult? Did the bursting vapors of petrol, inflamed each instant by a million crackling sparks, chatter with a harsher note because so much of it had not been paid for?

The imperfection of my eyes has been compensated to me by an unusual acuteness of ear. The sounds of this monstrous life smote upon me with all the blended percussions of an infernal symphony. The uneven scuff of footfalls, the hot squeak of brakes, the purring suction of rubber tires, the murmur of a thousand voices, the yelp of horns, the clash of changing gears, all these were separately audible, shaken together into one undulating roar of power by every imaginable timbre of ringing, whistling, throbbing, banging, bumping, grinding. The wildest jungle on earth could utter no such terrifying outcry. Our Giant Tree was a place of simplicity

and peace compared to this. Yet there was a profound principle of order behind this controlled savagery. I err by mentioning here thoughts and conclusions that came to me later. At the moment, the startling thing was, I liked it.

Gretchen has since assured me that I was crazed. Probably my impressions were indeed mixed and inconsistent, for there is no naturalist wise enough to compose a complete botany of this tropical excess. But at least, if I was mad, I had the privilege of madness: I saw clear, I heard intensely, I was the detached observer that philosophers have always approved. I breasted this ocean of living, I pushed deeper and deeper into this forest of tangled wills and desires. I could not inhale spaciouly enough of that nervous air, I wanted to run, to halloo, to strive. I glutted my sense with actuality. As I grew accustomed to the multiple tumult I could apprehend also the remoter sounds. Each of these populous perpendiculars enclosed a great hum

of doing, spurts of which jetted out through corridors and windows. I was aware of the chatter of typewriters, the windy boom of elevators, the whish of revolving doors, the incessant trill of telephones. So the jungle prowled and preyed and fed upon itself, and each of its creatures growled or purred or sang in the voice life gave it.

I grew cunning at threading my way through the crowd. The main trails were preëmpted by the greater beasts that moved snorting on their course, but in the byways were creatures of more brilliant plumage. Like birds of paradise rich millinery idols perched in caves of glass, looked out in a bright fixity of simper. I divined that the females were at their morning worship; painted and adorned for the sacrament of trade, they refreshed themselves by harmless gazing at these images. I noticed, especially when they climbed up and down the stairs of omnibuses, how comely and agile were the women. So star-

ting were the ingenuities of display among the nubile that I presumed it must be the height of the mating season. Their pleasantly simulated air of defiance was in the best biological tradition. It would be interesting, though dangerous, to tame one of these females and study her habits. So, with mounting excitement, I was borne in this great current of energy. I was no longer just the perplexed father of a castaway family and the conscientious breadwinner. I was a thoughtwinner. I fear I was a very imperfect Lutheran. "O God," I cried, "in the great rotations of Thy will spare these blessed pagans nor taint them with the malady of thought. Never, never civilize them and so destroy their charm."

Towards the meridian a new phase of being became apparent. The shift and strain of so many pressures, exerted from every direction upon the instant Now, reached an equilibrium. Space and Time seemed to balance in delicate composure. Peace consists not only in the ab-

sence of stress, but also in the neutrality of opposing stresses; there is no silence like that hidden in the heart of turmoil. Now an air of ease and comedy prevailed even on the fiercer jowls. There seemed to be a tendency to slip aside from the beaten trail to secret lairs of refreshment. I was aware by many symptoms that it was time for Lunch.

My philosophic ecstasy subsided. I remembered that I was alone and friendless among these foreigners; for money I had only a few Swiss banknotes (we had not expected to leave the airship, and the charges of the voyage had been paid beforehand) and my garb as an active workman was inappropriate for beggary. Fortunately underneath the overalls I still wore my excellent frock-coat: a little the worse for the hurricane, but still solidly respectable. If I could divest myself of the overalls I could venture to search for a bank and try to change some money.

Leaving the press of traffic behind, I turned into that side-street which I am not likely to forget. I passed along a quiet row of brown dwellings with high front steps. On one of these stoops sat a stout lady sunning herself placidly and fondling a pet dog. There were few pedestrians here, but even so I felt a natural shyness about removing the overalls in plain view. The mere act of letting down trousers, even when there are duplicates beneath, is one which always gives masculine modesty a twinge. I was looking for some corner of privacy when my eye was brightened by a flash of color far up in one of the tall buildings. At first I thought it was a row of tinted garments hung out to air; then, peering more intently, I saw that one of the exuberant architects of the town had expressed his sense of frolic by fluted scrolls of red, yellow, blue and green at the terraced summit of his edifice. I was pleased by this, and stood a moment to admire. Somehow it seemed of good

omen. Then, my gaze returning to earth, I saw Gazelle for the first time.

She was bending in flushed annoyance over a small sportive-looking automobile of gay canary yellow. It was not hard to guess what had happened. While she was indoors in one of the houses, another car had come up behind and had parked inconsiderately close. Trying to edge out from the narrow space her rear bumper had caught in the fender of the car behind. Now she could not move without causing damage. And she herself, with a most delicious undulation of her boyish haunches, was absurdly trying to separate the two vehicles with her own hands.

I am far from quick at giving help in matters I do not understand, but I saw her face lighten as she saw me there with overalls and monkey-wrench, apparently the competent mechanic. Unusual initiative moved in me. Without waiting to be asked, I seized the bumper. In spite of my timidity I am unusually strong, and with a

violent heave I lifted it clear. Not wishing to expose my deficiency of language, I did not speak. She was greatly pleased, and thanked me—as nearly as I could understand—by calling me Samson. It pleased me to think that she was a student of the Bible; but she followed this by some unexpected remark about a good egg. I suppose my face must have shown, without shame, how congenial was this thought. “Eggs!” I exclaimed, speaking unawares in my own tongue. “Ah, mademoiselle, you are clairvoyant. It is long-time since I have had some eggs.”

She looked at me sharply, considered my beard, and probably saw that I was not quite what the overalls suggested.

“Can I do anything for you?” she said, speaking Swiss with a most delightful outland accent.

I was so pleased to find someone with whom I could communicate, so charmed by her lively air of frank sociability, that I spoke without reserve. “Permit me to step into the privacy of

your carriage, and perform what I am too bashful to do on the street. I wish to remove these trousers."

"Go as far as you like," she said, opening the door of the car.

"No, no," I explained, "I do not desire to borrow the car, only to seek a momentary seclusion. If I can withdraw from these proletarian trousers I can make a good appearance at a bank, change some money, and get the egg you mention."

"Help yourself," she said. "I'd lend you a razor too, if I had one." Without any appearance of surprise at this unusual episode she stood nonchalantly on the pavement while I crept inside her tiny coupé. She took out a leather case and lit herself a cigarette. Then she saw that I was in difficulties. "Here," she cried, "stick out your legs and I'll pull." We did so, and I emerged from the car, rather embarrassed.

"Of all things, is it a parson?" she exclaimed.

"But it's not as bad as I feared. I was afraid you'd have on those Alpine leather shorts, and great beefy knees. I think men's knees are gruesome. Or it might have been a kilt. I thought from the beard you were a Scotch gillie. Here, don't forget your surplice."

She rolled up the overalls neatly and handed them to me.

"I apologize for such freedom," I said. "I am usually the most conventional of men, but circumstances very extraordinary——"

"That's the kind of circumstances I like."

"If you could just direct me to a bank, I will not trespass further."

"A bank? The town is insect-ridden with banks," she said, but using a word that startled me. "Even my father's a banker, or at least a vice-president of a merger. Perhaps he could help you. But don't be so cursed apologetic when you talk to him. The thing to do with a banker is look for his corns and then stamp on them."

It's easy enough, bankers are just covered with corns this season."

I began to ask how I might find her father's office, but she interrupted.

"You're rather priceless," she said. "You make me say amusing things, and I like it. You said something about an egg: come on and I'll blow you to lunch. I was waiting in here for a friend of mine but she hasn't turned up. I was just going away because I hate to drink alone. They've got some swell eggs Benedict."

I had a faintly uneasy apprehension of Gretchen's comment when she heard that of all the millions of natives I had fallen upon one of the youngest and handsomest to eat lunch with. It was always her quaint certainty that the women she had not seen were singularly fair. She believed, until convinced by scrutiny, that the stenographic offices at the League were a Caliph's dream. But there was no disputing this impulsive creature. Already she had locked the

car, led the way across the pavement, and rang a bell at a barred door below the street level. We were ushered into a quiet dining room that looked like the inside of an aquarium. Green walls were decorated with silhouettes of submarine corals and tropical fish. She made me hand the overalls and wrench to a surprised attendant, and pointed me to a doorway.

"Go and wash up," she said. "You need it. I'll order the grub."

When I returned she was sitting at a table in the corner, and two yellow cocktails were waiting.

"Put one of those inside," she commanded. "It'll do you good. I didn't order any soup, I was afraid of that beard. But the eggs are coming. Now tell me all about it, and God forgive you if you lie to me."

As Gazelle plays so strange a rôle in this memoir, I must attempt the difficult task of describing her. I guessed her age at about twenty.

She had been in captivity in some sort of enclosure where many of these young are reared, but broke out because (she said) the girls were too sentimental and played poker very badly. She was a vivid brunette, quick and graceful as a bird, slight and almost unformed in figure according to our Helvetian standards, but exquisitely lithe and neat. Her voice was a trifle strident and hoarse (perhaps from too much tobacco and whiskey, for these children smoke and drink like Indian squaws) and her manner casual and frequently blasphemous, but beneath this offhand mien was a most sensitive spirit and a passionate zeal for unselfish idealisms. Show her anything that sounded gallant, and no matter how much it might wound or trouble her she drew it promptly to her small sun-gilded breast. Where she saw nettles and poison-ivy she would pick bouquets of them, and—in her own phrase —“like it.” She took nothing on trust, gaily tossed away all the experience and disillusion of

the ages, determined to demonstrate everything to herself. She was quickly moved to sympathy by any plausible appeal; when she guessed wrong she wept a few strangling tears in secret and was again unterrified. Her brows were dark and thick as silk, her nose cool and definite, her mouth carmine as though from eating strawberries. She was of that fascinating epicene type which appears always in periods of decadence and which these people have so surprisingly developed. Browened by sunshine, hands hardened by sports, on the physical simplicities of an unawakened boy she imposed the elaborate make-up of a courtesan, yet retaining all her woman's possibility of simple surrender. The depth and fineness of her feelings was a puzzle to herself. Yet she had never been badly hurt, and believed that nothing that amused her could be wrong. She could not tell a lie nor hide her appetites any more than a panther, yet within her lively talk was a large capacity for silence. Her expe-

rience of life, obviously, had been in the primary colors; for blended tones and twilight tints she had little care. She was proud of her beauty and loved to adorn it, but even in a peacock exterior she was lovably humble and listened earnestly to anyone who seemed to know more than herself. Her appetite for knowledge was enormous. She had much chastity of mind, none whatever of language or behavior. I think she betrayed herself to me with unusual candor, as she had instantly set me down as a harmless eccentric who entertained her.

I am not accustomed to cocktail, and in my state of nervous excitement it worked strongly upon me. The gates of speech were opened wide, and I was rash enough to tell her everything. Usually I err on the side of caution, and I realized there might be danger in saying too much, but the warm infection of the liquor, the savory food, the charm of her attentive face and her fluent use of my own tongue with its attractive

uncertainty of accent, all these lured me on. At my description of the air disaster her eyes sparkled with animation; and so inspiriting is young female audience and so rarely have I had opportunity for un rebutted soliloquy that after the second cocktail I even ventured a few of my philosophical meditations of the morning.

"And so," I concluded, "if I can get your father to change a Swiss note for me——"

To my surprise she burst into merry laughter.

"Beauzeau," she said (or some such name; it seemed to be a term of humorous endearment in her vocabulary), "you've got a grand imagination, but it sounds phony to me. It's too late for the banks now, they're closed and the vice-presidents are all playing badminton. Give me your note, I'll cash it for you. It was a great yarn, and I don't believe a word of it. You ought to write for one of the Confession magazines."

"You don't believe?" I faltered. "But you asked me to tell you the truth."

"You should have known better," she said. "A great big man like you—and with a beard too. Don't tell me that isn't real."

She wound her fingers in it and gave a mischievous tug, causing me curious tingles of emotion.

"Come back with me, then, to the Giant Tree," I suggested.

"I'm sorry," she said. "Not to-day. I'm late already. You go back to the garage with that monkey-wrench and work the whipped cream out of your head. Here's my card; when you've got another fairy-tale as good as that, come and tell it to me. Pay the check out of this and keep the difference."

Before I knew it she had handed me a bill and was gone; and the waiter, who had been watching dubiously, was at my side with the reckoning. I paid it, found myself in possession of several dollars change, and was expedited to the street by the maître d'hôtel who already had

the door open and waited disapprovingly while I resumed the overalls. He had the iron grille between us so rapidly I had no chance to ask him if he was a fellow-countryman.

I was saddened by Gazelle's disbelief. If she, obviously of receptive mind, could not credit my story, who would? I blamed myself for my naïveté in being so talkative. But the cheering influence of food and drink was still with me, and at least I had proved that the natives were not necessarily unfriendly. I could make an encouraging report to my little family and satisfy some of their needs.

It was not difficult to retrace my steps, for in that rectitudinal disposition of streets it is easy to steer a course, and also our great silvery cliff was visible from the open crossings, dominating the whole region. I managed to buy some cheese, bread, and cooked sausage in a small shop, and hastened back. I was nearing the building, and thinking with some anxiety of the climb before

me, when I saw lying on the pavement a card that looked familiar. I neared it and trembled with agitation. I recognized my own handwriting, the notation *Customs Duties, collective action for reduction of . . .* I looked up aghast and saw two or three others, twirling and floating downward, tossed on draughts of air. Someone was throwing out my index-cards!

VIII

CRUSOE was not more startled by the footprint on the sand. You may imagine with what painful forebodings I fought my way up that appalling structure. Twice, by misunderstanding the inarticulate cries of various foremen, I neared the top only to be shunted into another elevator and find myself returned to the bottom. When at last I attained the Tree of Steel I was so nervous that I could scarcely climb. Some of the anthropoids, seeing that I carried a parcel, hailed me with shouts and gestures; I think they imagined it was more brandy, but I shook my head and evaded them. Forcing my trembling limbs up the ladders I gradually approached the summit.

The topmost link was not in place, and I cried out anxiously to summon the family. Great was my relief when Fritz's head appeared cautiously at the edge.

"Is everything all right?" I asked.

"Okay," he replied, and I reflected how quickly these youths pick up a new tongue, for this was a phrase of reassurance we had heard the anthropoids using frequently among themselves.

He lowered the ladder, and I ran swiftly up. My wife and little Otto, who were sitting in the tent, greeted me affectionately, and I was overjoyed to see that no obvious calamity had happened.

"Oh, Paul," exclaimed Gretchen, "we have been so frightened. You were away such a long time. I feared you were lost. What happened?"

"One cannot travel these vast distances without taking time about it," said I. "But I also was terrified to see our precious index-cards floating

through the air. I knew it would need something serious to cause so reckless a signal."

She looked embarrassed, so I thought it best to defer discussion until later. I described my own adventures briefly, explaining the enormous danger and tumult of the streets, my intuition of ethnic and economic conditions, and alluded to my encounter with the impulsive young woman. Gretchen was anxious to know how she was dressed.

"To tell you the truth," said I, "I hardly noticed. Generally speaking, she gave an impression of informality. A brown coat, and I think a white dress."

"A polo coat, I expect, and a sports frock of washable crêpe. Did you see much silk being worn?"

"Well, not intentionally," I said, much surprised by these questions. "Of course the stairs on the buses are rather high——"

"Mostly georgette, I expect, while the warm

weather lasts. What about knitted suits? They're all the thing in Geneva this autumn. When the League Assembly met I noticed that most of the delegates' wives had crocodile slippers. Did you see any here? This Gazelle person—such a silly name—what was her hat like? Was it well down over the right eyebrow?"

"Really, my dear," I protested, "I'm not sure. My mind was busy with serious matters. I seem to remember that she had very fine eyebrows. Perhaps she had taken her hat off."

"In a public restaurant? That seems very intimate."

"It was not exactly public," I explained. "Apparently the door was barred, one had to be known to get in."

"Probably, in this trade depression you speak of, prices will be very advantageous. I suppose you realize I shall have to have some new clothes before we can appear on the streets."

"Were there any toy-shops?" interjected lit-

tle Otto; and Fritz wanted to know what sort of car Gazelle had: was it an open or closed model, how many cylinders, what type of gear-shift, and how many kilometers to the liter of essence? Their unanimous conclusion seemed to be that I was an inattentive observer. But they heartily approved the sausage and cheese. If we had had a bottle of simple wine it would have been almost like a picnic in one of our own Alpine chalets. After supper the boys, already much at home in their peculiar surroundings, played a sort of gymnastic hide-and-seek among the beams and ladders, and I was alarmed to see how cleverly they imitated the steeplejack exploits of the anthropoids. Fortunately Otto was still attached to his safety-rope. Meanwhile my good wife narrated to me her experiences of the day.

"The morning passed quietly," she said. "The boys were very good, and the fine air and view helped to pass the time. Fritz made friends with

the anthropoids, as you call them, and picked up some of their language; I do not know whether it is of a sort that will be useful to him in social life. Better still, he procured from one of them an extra pair of overalls, like those you have, and though they are a trifle large I think I had better wear them. It had occurred to me that this high and windy plateau is not seemly for skirts, and the overalls are not unlike those beach pyjamas, which are really very smart. Fortunately I saved my little housewife from the wreck, and was able to remodel them where necessary."

She entered the tent and reappeared in a moment, blushing slightly, wearing a pair of workmen's pantaloons which by skilful touches she had given a pleasantly feminine air, and a floppy sun-hat made from a piece of canvas. Indeed, to my amazement, she was not unlike pictures I had seen in magazines. How little, I reflected, does one know a woman's resources until she is

compelled to utilize them. I complimented her heartily on this helpful ingenuity.

"This makeshift dressmaking took some time," she continued. "But as lunchtime passed, and still you did not return, we grew hungry. Fritz begged to go and forage below, and I allowed him to do so. While he was away a brisk rainstorm fell. I put Otto in the tent for shelter, but the good clean rain gave me an idea. After the hardships of the voyage and the storm I greatly needed a bath. Without any thought of being observed, I took off my clothes and rejoiced in a good shower. Absorbed in that simple pleasure, and with my eyes closed against the pelting downpour, I thought no harm until I heard sounds of applause. In neighboring parts of the steel-work quite a gallery of the anthropoids had gathered and were admiring. I'm sure their enthusiasm was intended as a compliment, but I could not help being mortified, for as they cheered and whistled from the high girders one

of them lost his balance and fell. I fear he perished. Rather than cause such accidents I took refuge in the tent, but if Fritz had not returned just then I believe they would have come right up to our platform."

I was pleased by my darling's humane compunction for these reckless artisans, but also I realized the grave error I had made in giving away that copy of *La Vie Parisienne*. For while Gretchen's figure is not at all the type limned in that magazine, yet it might exert a powerful attraction of contrast upon creatures accustomed to work among the rigid straight lines of structural steel. This thought, however, I kept to myself.

"So I considered," she said, "that in such an emergency it was more than ever desirable for us to get in touch with the more thoughtful class of the inhabitants. I could think of no more certain way of doing so than by throwing out some of your index-cards. I selected twenty or thirty

which suggested topics of serious international concern, and set them free, like carrier pigeons, to advertise our predicament. I felt sure you would approve, for they are certain to arouse interest and inquiry among the more enlightened. They might even bring some editor or publisher to our assistance. How I wished we had some of our better pamphlets with us! But the cards were all that were available."

"I agree," said I, "that your action will undoubtedly catch the attention of the citizens, yet I cannot but regret the sacrifice of any portions of our laborious index."

"Of course," she added, with a twinkle of mischief at having teased me, "I kept a memorandum of the cards which were thrown over, so they can be replaced."

I praised her for this foresight, and we sat silent a little while, admiring the evening panorama of lights. It was very peaceful in our eyrie

and we thought with compassion of those who were compelled to undertake the hard and tumultuous life of the streets. Then we committed ourselves to slumber.

I was waked the next morning by Gretchen rummaging stealthily in my coat pocket, in which, unknown to me, she had slipped her vanity case when we escaped from the airship. I do not know whether it was due to my description of the city, or to anticipation of further homage from the anthropoids, but she began putting a touch of rouge on her face. Pretending to be still asleep, I watched her tenderly. The powder had been caked by the storm, and the lipstick reduced to a jam, but I was touched by the courageous persistence of this feminine impulse, and secretly resolved to get her a new outfit at the first opportunity. Any wife of mine, I said to myself, shall be as savage as she wishes. Yet when she said, "If you go downtown to-day

you must get me a new compact," I found myself strangely annoyed by such frivolity.

I did not believe it wise to leave them that morning. The anthropoids seemed rather threatening; perhaps they expected more entertainment, for several times they gathered on the landing beneath us and looked hopeful. We finally restrained the boys from shouting "Okay" and other native phrases at them. I was in a disagreeable humor: the night had been damp, and I had a rheumatism in one leg, due I think to having sacrificed a moiety of my union suit. The hours wore on, and still there was no sign of anyone having paid heed to the index-cards. This seemed to me very surprising, and we spent a great part of the day in setting adrift more of the cards, until finally the most stimulating parts of the index had been tossed out, apparently with no result. I still think with a specialist's regret of these lost leaves of civilization cast away into space. On each one I wrote legibly *See*

Family Robinson, top of Empire State Bldg., and the items varied from Hungarian Optants, Expropriation by Roumania of, to White Slave Traffic, Investigated in Brooklyn and Buenos Aires. At least I should have thought that someone would have had sufficient curiosity to investigate what was a Hungarian Optant; but the intellectual inquisitiveness of large populations has probably been overrated. The boys soon made a game of our occupation, and enjoyed folding the cards into darts and launching them dexterously in various directions so that they travelled a long way. Fritz remarked: "Either, *alpha*, the inhabitants are already oversupplied with reading matter, or *beta*, they are insufficiently interested in the League of Nations." To which Otto added "Yebbut maybe they're so untidy they don't bother to pick up bits of paper on the street." To one accustomed to the extraordinary neatness of our dear Geneva this appeared very likely near the truth.

So this was a day apparently wasted. Anxiety led to irritability, as it usually does, and I am sorry to remember that my mood of depression caused me to speak peevishly to the others. Gretchen's imagination had been stirred by my account of the scenes below, and when she spoke hopefully of seeing the shop-windows, adding that she simply must find a coiffeur, as her hair was in a state, I realized how sadly our disasters had shaken her sweet nature. For it was plain to me from what I had seen that that murderous jungle of merchandising was especially fatal to the souls of women; planned, in fact, with that intention. But it was folly in me to say so, for every woman hopes at some time or other to trifle with damnation. Then Fritz, bored by our dispute, said that our little nest would never be complete until we had a radio, and Otto began counting up how many days it was since he had been to the cinema. In vain did I suggest that the sunset we were witnessing was more superb

than anything the screen could offer. These arguments reduced the boys to snivels and my poor wife to moody silence. We made an unwholesome supper of small briquettes of plastic sweets and vitamins brought up from the workmen's cafeteria. Afterward Gretchen sat with her needle making some refinements in her suit of overalls while I paced the platform wishing we had saved the bicarbonate of soda.

The next morning Gretchen urged me to go on another exploration. A man is always in the way around the house, she remarked, and insisted that she wanted to give our nest a thorough housecleaning in case the index-cards should bring us any callers. This was more like her true self, and though I had some apprehensions about leaving them I assented. I gave her some of the money I had got from Gazelle, to buy provisions, and we agreed upon a signal. In case of alarm or danger they were to fly a pair of overalls from the framework of the Giant Tree.

This would be visible to me from the ground below, and I could return in haste. It was a serene morning of delicate air, and our usual family spirit had returned. I embraced them all affectionately and departed.

IX

THE air that day reminded me of gin, it was so clear, so blithe, so tenderly illustrated with sunshine. And when I say gin, I mean our genuine Geneva gin, not the depraved ammonia which has become the national narcotic of America. It was early, and I rambled without purpose, interesting myself by going contrary to the larger currents of population, as in that way I could better watch the faces. Unusually dense files of people were moving through the crossways ravines, and presently I noted that they were emerging in thousands from a central subterranean cavern. It was hard to tell from their disciplined countenances whether they

were escaping from or hurrying toward. Some obscure but methodical convulsion was at work, for they issued not in continuous flow but in successive squads. Suddenly they would pour up thick from the various gangways, pressing intently, even gladly, like those quit of a sombre experience; then, as though some vast pressure were momentarily removed, there came only a few stragglers, the obese, the halt, or the derelict. Then again the stairs were filled with urgent masses who crowded forth and without pause or sideward look went steadily pattering to their employment. They lived by rule; theirs, I learned later, was the highest meed of praise, regular fellows. The very iron of the treads was worn and brightened by their millions of regular feet.

I could not be satisfied as to the meaning of this phenomenon until I made my way down and found a large underground railway. With the even rhythm of great pistons in a pumping sys-

tem trains of cars slid to and fro. From distant conduits they sucked in their human packing, shot the swaying masses to central arteries, discharged them through clattering turnstiles which enumerated the herd and propelled any who sought to delay with a genial postern whack.

Nothing could be more gloomy, grim, or sordid than these dark railroads, constructed evidently for the punishment of those not wise or wealthy enough to live within easy reach of their labor, but valuable also for the bewilderment of strangers. The cars were like prison vans, but some humane attempt had been made to distract the victims, for even here they were not entirely deprived of what they enjoy and understand: the solicitations of advertising, small sweetmeats, and newspapers. It was seemingly always their hope that even during the brief duration of their underground passage something exciting might have happened, for at every station there

were fresh newspapers, and magazines specializing in the more obvious consolations of love and hygiene. They were innocently unaware that love is an elusive essence that rarely gets into print; and hardly ever (by some very obscure law) on printed pages measuring larger than 6 inches by 9. The very hardy might also keep up their morale by seeing themselves in small mirrors attached to candy machines. Not having made a careful toilet for two days, I desired to consult one of these mirrors and consider the set of my beard, but I did not know whether it might be held dishonorable to use the glass without buying the candy. I attempted to inquire of the official at the money-window, but while I was trying to formulate the question he waved me away for delaying his clients.

At the cost of only a small coin I studied this extraordinary penal system for a long while. The trains exercised enormous fascination upon their passengers, who poured in like devotees

impassioned with ecstasy; through perilous narrow apertures of almost-closed doors they thrust and wriggled; all, even children and old bel-dames, gained that sanctuary with an air of triumph, burrowed into the close-wedged throng, and relapsed into their sincerest piety, the adoration of haste. Nowhere, in spite of their discomforts, did I observe ill temper or indignation. It was evident that the natives had been so well trained that it never even occurred to them that all this was fantastic and appalling. I concluded that given enough lithographs of underwear and canned victual they will endure anything.

I retired, thinking this over, to a large square adjoining a stately building known as the Library. The front of this building is guarded by two couchant stone lions rather supercilious in aspect, perhaps in the hope of frightening away those unworthy of its calm delights, and the unscholarly who merely hope to use its portico for

rendezvous. But behind is a quiet hospitable terrace with a double aisle of trees. The benches were always filled by citizens who seemed permanently sessile, but there were long shady curbs beneath the trees where one might rest and muse. Here, very different from the underground mel-
lay, was the resort of the idle or disheartened. From this retreat I could raise my eyes to the distant reticule of the Giant Tree to assure myself that Gretchen was not flying any signal of distress, and I could pace gently to and fro. A fountain splashed and sparrows twittered, yellowing leaves were crisp on the pavement, along the curb men sat patiently reading the newspapers which are misery's last ligament with life and hope. Under a stone canopy sits a bronze statue of a bearded sage who appealed to me not only for his tranquil dignity but also because his effigy holds a manuscript in its lap. I gathered from an inscription which I labori-

ously construed that he was a poet in the older mode. The words on the tablet said

*"Let no empty gust
Of passion find an utterance in thy lay"*

but an ironical comment on this was that his little plaza had become the tragic asylum of vagrants who often had reason enough for gusts of passion. In the stone niches on either side of his bronze chair sprawled two poor devils asleep, swathed in newspapers. This was not the battle-muster I had seen in the underground cavern; this was the acquiescence of despair.

I had a fellow-feeling for that elderly bard. I liked his benignant air of abstraction; little did he imagine (I have thought since) that he was going to have a telephone exchange named after him and poor wastrels wrapped in newsprint sleeping at his feet. Was he not, like myself, a man of letters? I was curious to see if any iden-

tity was given to the book or manuscript he held, and climbed up to look. There in his lap, carried I fear by some empty gust, was one of my own index-cards. It said: *Arts and literature, international collaboration in . . .*

Surely this was an omen. Some of my painful delusions were cured. I had seen, in an excavation, an incredible monster of machinery, a kind of steam shovel, terrific as a primæval rhinoceros. It rooted its clawed forearm into broken rocks, scooping and lifting huge boulders that many men could not budge. Growling always with the lust of doing, it groped and nuzzled and panted, now withdrawing, bending its jointed elbow, trying again, heaving away the rugged slabs broken off by hissing drills that struck and struck again like snakes. The iron paw tumbled the rocks into a truck, and as the load groaned dangerously up a steep incline the kimboed arm swung and followed it close to guard against a failure. This was more than

mere animal instinct. These people had learned the power and form of brutes and turned it to glory.

I strangely knew, in that leafy alcove of defeat, that sometimes the strenuous battlefield of the city can grant a peace unknown in the blind warfare of Nature's open spaces. Even in this wild western hemisphere men assiduous as the beaver or the mason-wasp had plastered themselves a geometric refuge on the dangerous arc of the globe. With joy I reflected that here too the card index and the decimal classification (the great bibliothecary bond of union) were held in reverence and I might be welcomed as a colleague. Here in the shadow of this great architectural thesaurus I would resume my rightful status as an intellectual. In short, I was as amiably muddled as anyone must be who thinks spacioously about human affairs; but I slipped off the overalls and laid them gently on one of the sleeping hoodlums, I put the monkey-

wrench in the poet's lap. I gazed aloft at the jut of the Giant Tree, lifted far into the dazzling elixir of noon. O noble hyperbole, said I (addressing the Empire State Building), I will be worthy of thee! My eyes filled with moisture as I thought of my brave Gretchen and our boys, waiting the result of my inquiries. I would buy her the harmless trinkets she craved.

I had noticed, not far from the Library, a large and gaily fenestrated shop which seemed to pride itself on the charms of muliebrity. It was called Beagle and Company. Thither I went, somewhat doubtful of my ability to describe what I desired. But I need not have worried. The management was only too eager to sell something and made it as easy for me as possible. I made gestures toward my face, attempting to convey the similitude of a female powdering and beautifying. I was at first directed to the cutlery department, and then to Jewish ceremonial vessels, but at length a committee of

floorwalkers divined my quest. Alas, the vanity cases were far beyond my meagre cash, but I was able to procure a small lipstick. While I was looking sadly at these luxurious trifles, and admiring the good-humor with which a young lady demonstrated their efficacy, I was briskly addressed. It was Gazelle.

This time I tried consciously, and in the interests of science, to form a mental picture of her appearance so that I could report intelligibly to Gretchen. Her costume was more austere than previously, and oddly enough the vivid quality of her grace was enhanced thereby. It was what is called (I understand) a shopping ensemble: a skirt and jacket of some dark blue, richly substantial and yet gossamer fabric. The skirt fell in lines of delicious straightness, with pleated parallel rugations, to (at a merely casual guess) about halfway between knee and ankle. A narrow white scarf, tucked beneath the belt, offered two severe parallel stripes within which was a

small touch of calculated negligence in the form of a soft jabot. She wore long white gloves from which emerged a brief snowy frill along the sleeves of the jacket. I made particular note that the slippers were not reptilian but black patent leather; the hat, of close flexible straw, was indeed deeply curved over the right cheek, just crossing the clear line of her right eyebrow, and tilted up on that side at the lower brim. It had an unnecessary but stimulating puffball affixed toward the rear.

"So this is where you buy your Vanishing Cream," she said gaily. "I see how you earn your living, darling; you write testimonials for cosmetics, like all the society leaders. Do you ever try mascara on your lashes?"

I hadn't the faintest idea what she was talking about, but I was embarrassed to be discovered in so unlikely a place and occupation, which could only increase her doubts of my sincerity. I tried awkwardly to explain.

"You're the most insidious old fraud," she said. "A regular South Sea Bubble, or American Can. I suppose you're looking round for some young woman to take you out to lunch. What sex appeal does do to us: the woman just pays and pays. Were *you* going to take him?" she asked the saleslady.

I was irritated by this loose talk, coming on the heels of my serious mood. I bowed stiffly and was about to leave; to my surprise she would not hear of it. It appears that this form of persiflage was not too seriously meant but was part of what she called her "line."

"Don't be so stuffy," she insisted. "Come to the Goldfish Bowl and have lunch. As a matter of fact I was thinking about you and wondering whether I'd been unfair. After lunch I'll go home with you and see if you're telling the truth. If you are, nothing's too good for you."

The Goldfish Bowl, as she called it, was where we had met before; it was on the same street as

Beagle and Company, and the thought of lunch was too inviting for me to stand on my dignity. Moreover I became aware of that faint but sensitive enteric expectancy (characteristic, I believe, of that brilliant Western climate) which suggests the desirability of a cocktail. The door-man was surprised to see me again, but obviously in that place Gazelle's will was law, and we had the same corner table.

"A drink has been arranged and will shortly take place," she said as I emerged from combing my beard.

Perhaps she had had twinges of conscience for having been abrupt with me, for she was adorably cordial, laid her slender brown hand confidently on my arm as we chatted, and drew me on to talk about myself. I thought that I had already told her most of what I knew, but I discovered that there was still much material. I have never encountered so stimulating a listener. Her golden cheeks were faintly flushed with

cocktail, a cigarette poised between her humorous lips, her amber eyes scintillated with excitement. She was much interested by the fact that I had written a book, but when I explained that it was a lengthy history of Human Rationality she remarked that the whole subject could be treated on a postal card. I admitted that my glimpse of the New World had already suggested the advisability of rewriting some of it.

"You might give some lectures," she said. "A man with a frock-coat need never starve in this country. I think I could get you some dates. The Junior League would get a big kick out of that beard."

I did not quite understand this mixed metaphor, but I agreed that there was much material for discourse. "I believe that the Americans more than any other nation need the protection of the League," I ventured. "The deprivations of your people move me greatly because they do not even know that they are being deprived."

"Hooey," she exclaimed. "Now I'll tell one. What are we being deprived of?" She raised her glass and remarked in the vernacular, "Here's how."

This, I had noticed, is a formal ejaculation which must in courtesy be repeated by the person to whom it is addressed, so I echoed it gravely. I was already learning that with a few standardized phrases one may go far in their somewhat elliptical form of communication.

"Go on," she said. "Spill the beans." This puzzled me, for we were not eating any beans. But so much depended on my retaining the goodwill of this enigmatic child that I thought it wiser not to confess all my thought. Walking behind the Library that morning I had had opportunity to get a cross-section of the whole press, for the men sitting on the curb were all immersed in newspapers which they held in front of their faces. As I strolled to and fro I deciphered the headlines of every kind of journal. And what

was beginning to trouble me was whether it would be safe for the European peoples to have much to do with this volatile race. Europeans are sober, patient mercantile folk, but the Americans, it appeared, are temperamental and credulous. If those newspapers were to be believed, their stock market flies up and down in frenzied zigzags; they fall into mass hysterias on small provocation; they continually suppose themselves on the verge either of calamity or salvation; everything is exaggerated to a panacea or a menace, so much so that I could not tell, reading the advertising, which was believed the graver peril to the republic: Russian communism or sore gums. In short, the Americans are essentially unbusinesslike, artists and imaginers in soul. So much the better for them, I like them for it; but it would never do to tell them so.

She saw that I was hesitating.

"You're holding out on me," she complained.

"Come clean! What do you think of our skyline?"

"I like it so well that I'm actually living on it."

This pleased her, and emboldened me to continue. "Perhaps what I am thinking is something like this," I said tentatively. "This is a childlike nation, and like all children its feelings are easily hurt. It takes very little to make America's lip quiver and her eyes fill with angry tears."

"Robinson, I adore you!" she cried, to my amazement. "You do my heart good. You're as spicy as Major Grey's chutney. So many people are just cold mutton. That's what I'm going to call you, my darling: Chutney!"

She seemed as happy as a child with a new toy, threw her arms round my neck and hugged me. Indeed, a new mind to play with was always her delight.

"Gosh, Chutney," she exclaimed, "how the

Junior League will just eat you up. You must do your lecturing quick, before you get stumored with facts."

I wanted to ask if this Junior League was some confederation of young sociologists, perhaps affiliated with Geneva, but she was now so exhilarated with schemes that she could hardly wait to finish our meal. Nothing would satisfy her but that we must immediately pick up the family and all move to her house to live. I faintly hoped that she would not too suddenly spring upon Gretchen her new nickname for me and its appositive "darling." She hastened to summon a cab and waited impatiently for me to drink my coffee.

I tried to prepare her mind for our unique conditions of domicile, but nothing dismayed her. When we reached the building she thrust past anyone who would stop her and demanded the proper elevator in so peremptory a tone that there could be no denial. She was quite un-

abashed by the perpendicular ladders and the cheers of the anthropoids, who must by now have imagined me the art editor of that French magazine.

But as we approached the top I grew uneasy, for no answer came to my hail. Wildly I scrambled up, outdistancing Gazelle, who bravely followed. There was the little tent, Otto's safety rope, the empty lunch buckets, all our pathetic makeshifts, even the scribbles on the floor where the boys had played tit-tat-toe with a piece of chalk. There was no distress signal, and no trace of violence; but the family was gone.

X

THERE is no need to describe my grief and misery, and my bitter self-reproach. Had Gretchen and the boys rashly gone out to explore and got lost in the mazes of the city? Had they been overpowered and carried off by the hardy anthropoids? It was impossible to know. Even the briefcase, with the remaining index-cards, had vanished. This made me wonder whether some rapacious publisher had kidnapped my helpless dependents, thinking to ransom them in exchange for the copyright of my book. My bewilderment was so great that the events of the next few days or hours are still vague in my mind. I was stunned with lonely wretchedness.

One of my first thoughts was that this calamity would again give Gazelle reason to suppose I had lied to her. Perhaps she did not really believe in the existence of the family at all. I half expected her to abandon me finally to my own resources.

But she acted with characteristic kindness and energy. She seemed to think that this tragedy was in some way partly her fault, and she did all that any human being could to console. Immediately she took charge of my movements. We left a note in the tent saying where we were going, then she shepherded me down from the Giant Tree and I found myself installed in her father's luxurious apartment on top of a high massif overlooking Eastern river. Here, from the guest-bedroom and bath, I had opportunity to reflect on the interesting passion of these people for building their residential flats among a perspective of gas-tanks, power-houses, abattoirs and factories. It was reassuring to them, I di-

vined, to feel themselves close to the fundamental energies of the capitalist system. I lay awake in homesick despair, listening to the ululations of tugboats and inhaling the effluvia of the stream. There was also a hospital near by, and the groans of patients mingled with the wail of river craft. I learned that the apt name of the neighboring vista was Hell Gate. I was struck by one more of these people's gorgeous paradoxes that in a tidal gut of sewage they kept at anchor the most beautiful and costly pleasure vessels.

Nothing could have exceeded the generous compassion of Gazelle and her father, a handsome brown and gray man who had evidently learned not to interfere with any of his daughter's eccentricities. He believed in offering as little friction as possible to the wheel of life; by not contradicting the notions of women and financiers he had attained a very comfortable momentum. He was the most carefully dressed man

I have ever seen; the more sporting his garb the more deliberately formal it seemed. When he wore flannel trousers and striped black and white shoes to go aboard his yacht he was as soigné as a bridegroom. This proved, Gazelle said, that he would never be more than a vice-president; I'm sure I don't know why. Her mother, she remarked, was also a financier, having gone all the way to Nevada to get a Liberty Bond. Apparently by some powerful reaction from the genteel life of penthouses the mother had fallen wildly in love with a Mexican trapper who never wore anything more polite than a khaki shirt. But it is possible that I give a wrong impression of many things, for the language is difficult, and I frequently misunderstood. I know that for some time I believed the term "penthouse" meant something quite different, and I was sorely puzzled by believing Gazelle had said that her mother's paramour was a Mexican Trappist.

But the abandoned banker greeted me cour-

teously without surprise or dismay, even though when he first saw me I was wearing some of his own clothes which Gazelle had purloined for me. He was always at his most charming in the late afternoon when he returned home punctually at six o'clock after exercising at some athletic club. He got into dinner clothes and rambled pensively about the apartment trailing a vast cocktail urn, pouring out drinks for any visitors he found and quite content not to know who on earth they might be. Relieved from the painful task of explaining to his clients why so much guilt was rubbing off the edges of their securities, he was eager for simple sociability and liked to exchange views on serious matters. At such moments a faint gleam of doubtfulness sometimes visited his countenance. He would announce dispassionately how many failures there had been on the stock exchange that day, and seemed to crave a little reassurance as to the stability of the existing order of things.

Gazelle was determined, I dare say rightly,

that I must not be allowed to fall into melancholy brooding. I was taking a much needed bath, my first since Geneva, when she came briskly into the guest room, flung open the bathroom door, bade me continue undisturbed and sat cross-legged on the bed in a brilliant suit of yellow lounging pyjamas. It was stupid of me, I know, but I felt so much at a disadvantage sitting in the tub with my beard a crinkly foam of soapsuds that I fear I disappointed her by my embarrassed replies.

"Go right ahead, Chutney" she remarked. "I'm not even looking at you. Now there's nothing for you to worry about; nothing at all. I'm your manager, and you're going to be well managed. The first thing to do is try out this lecture idea. I'm going to write it for you. I've got a title for it that's absolutely the berries, *What a Young Nation Ought to Know*."

"But how can I lecture?" I protested. "I don't even speak the language."

"You don't need to, any more than a kitten needs side-pockets. You can memorize the lecture, and everything else I'll take care of for you. But you've got to help me write it, because it must have your own slant on things. Plenty of comedy, and you can get in some good cracks in favor of the League, and the History of Human Reason, and any other dope that's weighing on you. And as for publicity—gollies! if they knew you'd actually been marooned on the mooring mast the mayor would give you a municipal reception. But we'll hold off on publicity until we get you a workout and see how you shape on the platform."

She went on developing her ideas until the water grew cold in the tub and I had to beg her to retire. Before I had finished dressing I heard the distant clatter of her typewriter. She was already beginning to prepare my lecture.

I look back on that literary collaboration with strangely mixed feelings. It has become quite

famous and has been translated into several languages, yet I do not recognize it in any form except the foreign text my relentless mistress compelled me to memorize phonetically, line by line. Start me in it anywhere and I can go on automatically to the end. I shudder to think what my accent must have been like, and I was troubled when Gazelle shrieked with laughter, as she often did during our rehearsals, but she kept assuring me it was good stuff. Extraordinary creature! She would lure me on by conversation and cocktail to express my naïve opinions, and then I would find them, cleverly rephrased in the indigenous argot, imbedded in our manuscript. It was a pity that she had had no systematic education, for her talents were worthy of a Madame de Staël; who was also, as I remembered, the daughter of a banker. And though black anxiety regarding the fate of my dear ones was often at my heart, Gazelle kept me so constantly at my task that I had no leisure

for despair. Incessantly she rehearsed me in gesture, deportment, pronunciation. She would try to blow me up in my lines by giving me sudden cues and demand that I "go on from there."

So the evening approached when I was to make my *début* before an *élite* club of social dowagers. For Gazelle's credit and to show myself not a mere sorner I was eager to make a success of it. The affair was preceded by a dress dinner at which I encountered the high formal modes for the first time. Although I was rapidly becoming impervious to shock I was equally embarrassed when the ladies of the committee faced me and when their backs were turned; some of them were very well turned. There was one who exposed on the declivity of her spine a large mole which by Nature's benevolent plan was surely intended to be hidden at that latitude. Shortsighted as I am, I thought at first it was a hibernating moth which had secreted itself in her dinner gown and was now revived by

agreeable warmth. I wondered if I ought to capture it before it crossed the isthmus. I consulted Gazelle, and when I learned the truth the thought of my narrow escape agitated me. "That sort of thing should only be exposed to spice," I said reproachfully. "What on earth do you mean, exposed to spice?" she asked. "Mouse, mice," I said; "the plural of spouse is spice?" "No, darling" she corrected me, "the plural of spouse is bigamy."

This *gaffe* did much to shake my composure, for beyond the memorized lecture my vocabulary extended only to a few phrases I had picked up from her. Far down the table, across rondures of hypermaternity, I could see her smiling to me encouragingly, but I was horridly nervous and would have given much to consult my manuscript, which Gazelle had in her possession. When the fatal moment arrived she drew me aside in a rear corridor just before I ascended the platform. She produced a flask from her bag

and gave me a small drink. "Only one," she said. "You can get cooked afterward if you want to. I'll be right behind you to prompt you if you need it, but you won't. Now, knock them cold."

This reassurance was just what I needed. A kind of unconsciousness supervened, I heard my voice uttering the carefully rehearsed paragraphs, and to my amazement the address was punctuated with much laughter and applause. Gazelle must have arranged her material with a cunning alternation of humor and seriousness. Unfortunately I was too excited to pause at the proper places to give the audience a chance to laugh or rustle; I pushed earnestly on, concerned only to be textual. But presently I became so exhilarated by this friendly reception that I ventured on a few impromptu interpolations. I uttered the phrase "The plural of spouse is spice," which seemed to strike a responsive chord in that audience. Apparently this was a truth that many of those ladies had personally

verified. Afterward I was even requested to autograph programs, and I, the most plodding of creatures, found myself hailed as a wit and a deep thinker, compared favorably with Chesterton and Keyserling. Gazelle rushed me away before I could spoil the impression by any errors. More astounding still, as we drove home in the yellow car she showed me a check for \$250. "That's what we've earned," she said. "Old-timer, it was a knockout; next time we'll charge five hundred."

XI

THE success of this experiment convinced GAZELLE that we were on the right track, and she followed it up with fierce initiative. I was mostly in the dark in regard to what was going on, but I know she was violently busy with photographers, telephones, telegrams, and printers' proofs. While thus occupied she sent me out to ramble round the city. "Get a load of this town," she instructed me, "and come back with some more of those naïve reactions." She had a fixed idea that I was entirely helpless and when she could not go with me herself she insisted on my being accompanied by a rather speechless blond young man, one of her numerous queue of ad-

mirers, who was known to me only by his nicknames of Curfew and Moonlight Saving. I gathered vaguely that these poetic sobriquets were an allusion to the fact that though diffident by day he came to life in the evening. He usually telephoned the apartment about dusk, and when weary of him Gazelle would tell the butler "Curfew shall not ring to-night." Just what form his evening vivacities took I cannot imagine, for in my observation he was amiably null and void.

During this interim I managed once to sneak off alone to the great building of my first adventures, but perhaps some rumor of our irregular occupancy had made the authorities more rigorous. It was impossible now to obtain admission, and I could learn nothing of my family's fate. Sadly I gazed from afar at our abandoned eyrie, which was already altered in appearance, for the open framework of the pinnacle was being built over.

Gazelle's father was as ignorant as myself of what was being planned. When he came home one afternoon and found the apartment fizzing with reporters and flashlights he only inquired mildly whether anyone had been murdered. I remarked that I feared his privacy had been murdered, to which he replied, "It was never very strong." He retired to the butler's pantry, where I heard him rattling cubes of consolation. I noticed that he poured me an especially deep one on that occasion, and something in his shrewd gaze suggested that he began to think of me as a possible asset, not just one of Gazelle's freaks.

This day was what Gazelle called our release date, when she imparted some of our story to the press. She did the talking, and as I saw the bright eyes of the interviewers on me I wondered what she was telling them. She explained to me that they were kindly people, and even when they blighted anyone's life by indiscreet

comments they did so in the most affectionate and jovial spirit, assuming that none of their readers would remember it the next day. "America," I remarked, "though youthfully excitable, sleeps every night like a child, and all is forgotten in the morning." "A grand line," they all exclaimed, and scribbled with pleasure.

That evening Gazelle showed me a printed circular she had prepared for distribution among ladies' clubs. By furious telegraphing she had arranged a lecture trip for me, with engagements already fixed in a dozen different cities. I exclaimed that with my ignorance of the language and modes of travel this would be impossible. She retorted calmly that she was going with me as my manager, and we were leaving the next day. I was sent out under convoy of young Moonlight Saving to buy a supply of shirts and other linen, and a portmanteau of her father's was packed for me. I thought that my

old Lutheran frock-coat was hardly adequate for travel, but she insisted that it was "in character" and could not be abandoned. Before I fully realized what was happening we were in a small cabin on a train de luxe, bound I supposed for the Far West. But when after all-day travel we reached a lively city and I complimented its citizens on what I assumed to be the noble Pacific, it proved to be Lake Erie. After ten hours of steaming we were still in the State of New York.

So began my real initiation into the teeming life of the interior. I dare not be geographically specific, for most of the time I had no idea where we were, in what city or what state. Our arrangements were entirely in Gazelle's hands, and as the tour had been planned in haste the itinerary was not methodically transcontinental but rather zigzag. As I think back about it I am confounded by the strong similarity of those many comfortable hotels, all with their shining white

bathrooms and a telephone close to the bed to wake one up in somersault. Likewise I remember an endless succession of little "drawing rooms" on long-distance trains, with their brown metal panelling, green plush seats, and the impromptu table for minerals or ginger ale. Even the landscape of the Middling West had a general uniformity. Whether sitting in a fast train or soaking soot out of my beard in a porcelain tub I confided all responsibility to Gazelle. "Make your mind a clean slate for the pencil of destiny to write on," was her instruction to me. I could not help replying that the slate-pencil sometimes squeaks.

I had been somewhat alarmed by the idea of going travelling à deux with my vivacious sponsor. I feared that our clients the women's clubs might consider it unseemly, but her behavior was so excessively businesslike that no scandal ever attached to us. Any oddity of de-

portment was always excused by the fact that I was a foreigner, for these people, however rigorous among themselves, consider Europeans exempt from the severe conventions. Knowing, however, that Geneva is really the most strait-laced of cities, I was always anxious lest news of this expedition should get back to the Secretariat, in which case my usefulness to the League would be at an end. But Gazelle's command of the situation was complete, and we soon fell into a definite routine. Most of our travel was done by day, for I was unskilful at the abominable task of dressing and undressing in a railroad berth. On the few occasions when we had to take sleeping trains, Gazelle arranged to have the lower berth just opposite mine. When, after laborious contortions, I had prepared for the night, and the car was silent, she would reach across the aisle from her green alcove and shake my curtains. "Are you all right, Oldtimer?" she

would whisper, and then hand me a carefully measured nightcap of rye whiskey and bicarbonate of soda.

But generally she managed so that we reached our destination in the late afternoon. We always had two communicating rooms, and while I was simmering in the tub (I never wearied of that remarkable luxury of the private bathroom; I do not suppose any Swiss citizen ever had so many baths before) I would hear her get busy on the telephone and the pleasant clink of arriving trays of ice and ginger ale. Conference with a mysterious functioneer known as the Bell-Captain usually put her in touch with sources to replenish her supply of whiskey, for she said it was always important to offer the reporters a highball. Boys and girls from the newspaper offices would soon arrive, and I would hear her haranguing them in the next room. Of me she made a bit of a mystery, would keep the door closed between the two chambers on the plea

that I was thinking over my lecture, and would not allow me to be seen until she had properly prepared their minds. She was most particular about this, and arranged a signal by which I might know when to expect them. When I heard her tell rather loudly a certain enigmatic anecdote about a Scotchman and the neck of a horse, I was supposed to make sure that no garments were scattered round the room and arrange myself thoughtfully in an armchair with my manuscript. I was never allowed a drink until after the performance, and she saw that my evening suit was pressed and my tie properly tied. We dined sparingly on a plate of soup in our hotel suite, after which she conducted me to the hall and turned me over to the committee in charge. I might have been tempted to think that once mastered the lecture was a stereotyped affair, but she never allowed me to grow perfunctory. She was constantly revising the text, putting in or cutting out, altering emphasis and anecdote, re-

hearsing me conscientiously during our long train rides. For each city she wrote a special introductory paragraph involving local allusions, which I had to memorize. "Showmanship, showmanship!" she would exclaim. "Never unbend until after the performance and you know I've got the check in my bag."

Only those who have endured the ordeal of the public platform know what nervous torsion it involves. It was often remarked by our friendly hosts that the Swiss pastor gave an impression of offhand ease. His frank Helvetian naïveté was much commended; but I assure you that beneath that falsely casual air he was moist with apprehension. Still I remember those pale clouds of upturned faces; the occasional elderly gentleman at the back of the hall with hand cupped behind his ear (how I thanked him in my heart for that simple gesture of trust) and the occasional crash of a folding chair when some massive lady made a sedentary misjudg-

ment. It was necessary for me to occlude all conscious cerebration and speak in rapt automatism. If a spasm of self-awareness came over me, I faltered and must go back to the beginning of the paragraph. With that renewed start I could usually proceed.

I discovered that after the strain was over and if the talk had been moderately well received I had an immense and immediate need for relaxation. Gazelle knew how desirable this was, and by the time the lecture was finished she would usually have discovered, among the committee or elsewhere, certain individuals whom she regarded as promising. She had an unerring eye for symptoms of social frolic; perhaps there is some secret signal of recognition among the light-minded. From the most serious gathering she was able to cull a few who (as she said) "looked amusing." These she usually invited to join us afterward at the hotel, where she provided me with a tall highball and my native

cheese and then led the company on to play charades, anagrams, blind men's buffet, and all sorts of ingenious parlor games. There was one curious promiscuity called Sardines, perpetrated entirely in the dark, of which I grew very fond, and the lively antics of rolling underneath hotel beds or piling up en masse in the bathtub were healthful exercise. The genial informality of these affairs was appealing, and once more I reflected that these people were children at heart. Some of our guests were probably startled by the gusto with which the Swiss philosopher entered into these merriments, and Gazelle used to lament that I perspired so easily. I sometimes tried to imitate an accomplishment of hers, that of coiling completely round a plain chair, hitching herself from the seat behind the back of the chair and round to the seat again, without touching the floor or upsetting. This and many varieties of flexible gymnastics she was adept in. It gave pleasure to

our little gatherings to see me attempt it. I never succeeded, and fractured several hotel furnishings. On the other hand I could imitate a Swiss music box and do passably well at a yodel, an art little known in the Middling West. These amusements were undoubtedly *infra dig.*, but Gazelle and I were always on the road again early the next morning before our guests had recovered from their surprise.

On one of these occasions something happened that had much influence upon later events. I am ashamed to say I do not even recall in what city the momentous episode took place. We had arrived earlier than usual that day, and while Gazelle was out attending to business I sat idling in our suite. I was familiar by this time with their admirable habit of always placing a copy of Holy Writ in hotel rooms, and I followed the surprising instructions for travelling men printed in the Book. "If trade is poor," said the printer's note, "Read Psalm 37, John 15.

If very prosperous read 1st Corinthians 10, 12-13. If you are all out of sorts, read Hebrews 12." I did so, and the solemn and beautiful words, even in a strange translation, had their effect on me. I found myself depressed and homesick. As always when left alone, the grief of separation from my little household was bitter. In the hope of altering my mood I turned to a calendar issued by the hotel to tell what was going on that week, and noticed that on that very day both the Optimists' Club and the Credit Men's Association were holding simultaneous luncheons. This, I thought, was characteristic of the American habit of cancelling out by two simultaneous opposites. That manufacturing city, I noted, was whistling hard to keep up its courage. I read that it boasted "the largest Little Theatre in the world," and that it "feels depression less, suffers less, and recovers sooner than any other city in the country." In that same hotel meetings were being held that

day of the Laundry Owners, the Flying Club, the Adcraft Guild, the Real Estate Brokers, the Chiropodists, the Racing Pigeons Union, the Irish Republican League, and the American Dental Association. I made a memorandum of these but foolishly neglected to note the name of the city. But these multiplied evidences of life's groping for Nirvana saddened me more and more. My pitiful lecture was probably less valuable to the world than a chiropodist or a racing pigeon. I fell into unhappy lethargy from which I had to rouse myself when Gazelle returned, radiant from a visit to the hairdresser and with the news that she had met a grand guy for our evening sociable.

Perhaps it was by reaction from this passing melancholia that that evening was exceptionally cheerful. The lecture went well. The grand guy whom Gazelle had mentioned brought with him a brand of stimulant unknown to me. It was called Bourbon, as fiery and as sure of eventual

downfall as the princely family for whom it is named. With this as foundation our little soirée was brisk. Mr. Cameron, the guest of honor, proved to have a mellow and facile gift of music, and sang ballads which pleased everyone. There was one about McSorley's Twins, accompanied at the close of every cadence by a double stamp which was taken up by the company and eventually caused chiding from the hotel desk. So we ended the evening more gently with a round of Sardines. During this pastime Gazelle and I found ourselves under a bed in intimate apposition to Mr. Cameron. He whispered "Hey, I went to hear your lecture to-night. That's good stuff, you ought to put it in book form."

This was a new idea, and Gazelle rose to it with her usual alacrity. As soon as the game was ended she bundled out the other visitors and sat down to talk Turkish (one of her odd phrases) with this person. It appeared that he was head

salesman for a publishing firm. "Now get me, I don't know whether it's literature or not," he said. "I'm a merchandiser, not a bookman. But let me put that spiel in print, I can sell it."

XII

IT WAS fascinating to see the instinctive affinity between Gazelle and Mr. Cameron. They understood each other at once. Each confided in me privately that the other one had Personality, a mysterious essence which is highly esteemed in America. We were then near the end of our tour, and Mr. Cameron rearranged his own schedule to accompany us back to New York. We sat together all day long in one of those little drawing rooms in the train, and while I listened uncomprehendingly they palavered (or as he called it, "visited") across the little table and occasionally rang for an African to bring more sandwiches and ginger ale. He entertained Ga-

zelle with innumerable bravura anecdotes, a few of which she retranslated for me. These jocose little fables were apparently part of his professional repertoire: it was his custom, when selling his goods to a bookstore, to numb the buyer's forebodings by telling a series of anæsthetic tales. I have no gift for remembering these parables, and at any rate I believe they were not material I could have used in my lectures. I dozed and woke and dozed again, and still they were talking. The contract for the publication of *What a Young Nation Ought to Know* was finally signed as the train snaked round a monstrous sinuosity called the Horseshoe Curve, because Mr. Cameron said horseshoes were lucky. The signatures were duly witnessed by the blackamoor, and then, as dusk came down over the Pennsylvania Railroad, I saw Mr. Cameron occasionally gazing at me in a speculative way as though he regarded me as socially superfluous. He bade us farewell at the terminal and took the manuscript with him.

I was astounded to learn that the proceeds of our trip, even after the very heavy expenses were deducted, were as much as I could have earned in a year's hard work at Geneva. Gazelle showed me a careful summary of our accounts, what she called the Swindle Sheet. I insisted on her dividing the proceeds evenly between us, though she only wanted to take a small commission. She was particularly proud to exhibit our figures to her father. He examined them carefully and said it was a better racket than his own. I thought that now I should go elsewhere to live, but he would not hear of it.

Gazelle and I were also rated as co-sharers in the contract for the published lecture. I had tried to interest Mr. Cameron in the idea of my History of Human Reason, but he was not encouraging. I myself, the more I thought about my experiences, was increasingly convinced that rationality plays a smaller part in human affairs than I had supposed. I wrote to the publisher

in Geneva that I had decided not to publish the work for the present. For now I had tasted the strong savor of American paradox, and I confess I found it appetizing.

Mr. Cameron had the lecture put into type with great speed, and Gazelle read the proofs. He planned to publish at once, without the usual painstaking preliminaries of sending salesmen all over the country with advance copies. He said it would be good strategy to take the Trade by surprise, and considered that the little book would be exactly what everyone would want for Christmas presents. For some mysterious reason his notion seemed to be that people would buy it never for themselves but always to give to someone else. He thought it important that I should meet as many booksellers, editors, and reviewers as possible. To my surprise most of them were not grizzled *littérateurs* but young and humorous females with (as I remarked) a High Coefficient of Muliebrity. This phrase, after he had studied it a little, pleased him much,

and the initials H. C. M. became one of his favorite catchwords. I was increasingly aware of the feminization of American culture.

Mr. Cameron was a man of boundless aspiration. He even schemed to introduce me to some of the jurymen of the powerful Book Clubs; though these he explained were more difficult of access. These mysterious people, whose favor was so important, apparently all lived remotely in the country so as to discourage publishers by the high price of telephone calls and have plenty of time for reading. They came to town but rarely, for fear they would be asked questions as to what books they had examined. They convened very secretly once a month to crown some volume with profitable laurels and hastily returned to their villegiature.

Though I now circulated freely in the social world of publishing, the curious thing was that I hardly ever saw a publisher's office. The most important phases of their business were con-

ducted entirely at the Goldfish Bowl and many other similar retreats; or at clubs, afternoon teas, week-ends, and picnics. I often wondered why these hard-headed merchants bothered to pay the high rent of offices at all. Genuinely anxious to learn something of this intellectual life I followed all its manifestations eagerly. Sometimes the unworthy suspicion occurred to me that an author—particularly a foreign author—was in some danger of being spoiled. My own extreme slowness in getting to understand the very simple decimal coinage of the nation was due to the fact that I was never allowed to pay for anything. The American publisher assumes, for reasons that can only be known to himself, that authors and booksellers are in a state of beggary; if ever one of them motions to the waiter to bring him the check there is a simultaneous roar of protest from every publisher present.

But I cannot attempt to give a *précis* of all my astonishments. The bookish life of the city was

as new to Gazelle as to myself, and she enjoyed it acutely as a form of slumming, although one day, after attending a publisher's tea, she exclaimed bitterly that she was through with literature forever. Mr. Cameron made a point of taking us to all the haunts of the literati, and remarked jocularly to Gazelle that soon there wouldn't be a single native author of any importance whom she didn't know by sight. "That's why I'm reading Chaucer," she said. I confess that in my simplicity I had taken these pleasant cafés for granted, and was startled when she said slily, "Chutney, some day I'm going to be very unconventional. I'm going to take you to a place where you won't be breaking the law." I had not realized until then that the Constitution was so frangible.

At any rate, these speecheasies, as they called them, were true to their name. They made conversation fluent. With the passion of Americans for anything not their own, the food was

usually Italian or French, the drinks Canadian or Caribbean, and the high-frequency and short wave-length of their stimulants induced much freedom of tongue. Mr. Cameron afterwards attributed the failure of our little volume to be chosen by the Book Clubs to the fact that at a lunch meeting to which he had lured one of their judges I spoke with indiscreet zeal. I had been saying that on no account should the unsullied humors of these people be marred by too much intercourse with matter-of-fact Europe.

"Surely there is more comedy here than elsewhere," I exclaimed, "because there is a wider disparity between pretence and fact. You pretend to be a dry nation yet there is more drinking than I ever dreamed the human kidney could tolerate. You pretend to be a free country, even sing about it, though the incantabile nature of the anthem warns of some paradox; and you are more fettered by laws and conventions than

any other people. You pride yourselves on independence, yet your most fashionable clothes and books are imported from abroad. You like to imagine yourselves hardheaded and material but you are generous to the verge of frenzy. If a citizen of Europe had to buy back his hat every time he hung it up in a café, the whole Continent would soon go uncovered. You pretend to be pacific, yet your school-children are drilled in the most ferocious and dangerous patriotism, and you show me an armada of 700 army planes in air at once. You pretend to be a land of great open spaces, yet here I see the closest congestion on earth. What bazaar of India could compare with your Coney Island on a hot Sunday? You pretend to be a race that lives close to nature, yet where is there so much food put up in cans, cartons, and paper bags? You pretend to be a nation of ingenious labor-savers, but how much suffering is caused by complicated gadgets that don't work. You make a

sacred fetich of the revolution that founded your government but view modern revolutions with horror. Some mischievous god created your temperament for extremes. You describe to me how a few years ago all your leisure class rushed madly to Florida, with a unanimity only equalled by their rush away from it a little later. Yes, the excessive is your joy. Where else is there so much hot water in tubs, so much iced water in tumblers! Nation of romancers, dreamers, extremists, I salute thee! Let's pretend! It is that faculty of infatuation that marks all great creative periods. I can never go back to Europe. It is much too exciting here."

Mr. Cameron always enjoyed my outbursts and knew my enthusiasm; indeed he had already volunteered to help me take out my first papers in American citizenship; but I could see that he feared the effect of all this on the literary critic. He tried to calm me, but Gazelle was encouraging me and tweaking me on.

"Fifty years ago," I cried, "your poets and philosophers saw all this coming but no intellect since then has been able to cope with it. Ah, how you need a Voltaire! You have had lots of sentimental Rousseaus, but no Voltaire. But he would have to live as he did near our own Geneva, in a bolt-hole prudently close to the frontier. Voltaire at Ferney, like an electric refrigerator secreting his crystalline cubes of clear reason! The electric current of all Europe's thinking was wired through Ferney, and when Voltaire's engine of intellect was at work the lights momentarily dimmed down everywhere else because he was using so many kilowatts. America needs a Voltaire! What cauterizing comedy he could give us!"

Alas, you can see by my mentioning the great sceptic in this way how far I had wandered from the tenets of my youth. I halted, amazed at myself; but Gazelle was enchanted. She relished my metaphor, suggested by life in her own

apartment where the big electric icebox was the shrine and centre of all home life. She embraced me passionately, somewhat to Mr. Cameron's annoyance, for he was growing sentimentally attached to her. As he put it in his quaint way, he was suffering from Gazelle-trouble. "Darling," she cried, "tell me what to read of Voltaire's." But the critic was not pleased, and I think I had already vexed him by confusing Moby Dick with Poor Richard.

"I figure that that speech cost you about five thousand dollars," Mr. Cameron said to me later. "Do you think the pleasures of self-expression are worth as much as that?"

But now I must press on to the most surprising of all my adventures. I have told you that Mr. Cameron liked to take me to all the illegitimate cafés favored in artistic circles, and some friend had told him of a new one which was said to be unique. It was reported to be different from most in that it was not modernist in

decoration but occupied a shabby old house in an unfashionable region, and was distinguished by simple cordiality, modest tariff, and notable cooking. There was no hat-check girl, which appealed to Mr. Cameron, who said that his hat had cost him 75 dollars overhead charges during the past year. He suggested that we celebrate the publication date of the little book by visiting this new hideaway. Congenially squeezed into Gazelle's yellow car, the Scrambling Egg, we three drove downtown to the address given us. The exterior of the place was humble enough, the windows were shuttered and showed no signs of life and the basement door was defended by a massive wooden barrier, but a small movable panel in the barricade was significant to the experienced. The procedure was one familiar enough in the lives of literary people. One rang a bell, whereupon the panel was slid back from within and an inquiring eye appeared at the hole. I was first of

our party, and pushing my beard aside approached my lips to the porthole, prepared to whisper the name given us as password. Imagine the shock, the joy, the amazement, when in the small circular aperture appeared an eye that seemed strangely familiar. There was a scream, and it vanished with a thud. It was some time before the door could be got open, for the waiter who ran from inside thought we must be federal officers. At last the barrier was removed, and I held my swooning Gretchen in my arms.

XIII

"IF YOU were only more skilful at understanding women," said Gretchen (when embraces and introductions were over, and we had all sat down together to talk), "you would have known I would not stay much longer on top of that building. Unpractical as usual, it had not occurred to you that our most valuable resource was the order-book left in your hands by the unfortunate salesman. As soon as you had gone I made myself and the boys as presentable as possible and prepared to descend. Instead of waiting helplessly for your return, we might be able to surprise you by an achievement of our own. Fritz carried the briefcase, and I kept little Otto

roped to me, though his agility on the ladders was wonderful. The anthropoids were most kind. They are chivalrous at heart, made many gestures of compliment in regard to my overalls, and almost embarrassed us by their friendly attentions. They safeguarded our climb down the Giant Tree and showed us to an elevator.

"When we reached the ground I was enchanted. Instead of the dangerous wilderness you had described I saw all the beauty and order of a great metropolis. A policeman was good enough to detach Otto from his rope, for the knot had pulled very tight when he dangled from it once or twice during our descent. We walked along the street for a few blocks just to feel at home, and I saw at once by the shop windows that even my makeshift costume was passably in the mode."

Otto.—Everyone admired Mamma's trousers.

Fritz.—They thought we were advertising something.

"I would have liked to take time for a visit to a hairdresser," my wife continued, "but I had only the little money you left me. We signalled a taxicab, and I showed the driver the address of the Ginger Cubes Company, which was printed in the salesman's book."

Fritz.—I watched the way carefully, so we could find our way back.

Otto.—Yebbut I watched the meter. It was 45 cents.

My Wife.—The boys were both wonderful. My two little Americans, I call them now.

"The Ginger Cubes factory frightened us at first, for of course the few phrases Fritz had picked up from the anthropoids were our only vocabulary. But the name of the president of the company, Mr. Nicholas Ribstone, was printed on some of the papers in the order-book, and we kept pointing to it earnestly. Several young women tried to find out what we wanted, saying that Mr. Ribstone was busy, but finally Fritz

wrote on a piece of paper something that had effect."

Fritz.—I wrote, *This is a haymaker. Okay, chief.*

"We were taken to Mr. Ribstone's office. Several men, very clean-shaven and in their shirt-sleeves, were sitting round a table, studying a large chart which looked like a profile of a jagged mountain range beginning at the left with high Alps but gradually diminishing to low foothills. I thought at first they must be at lunch, for they were all chewing solemnly, but in fact it was an important sales conference. They were experimenting with new products and were in the act of passing judgment on a revolutionary lozenge. They rose politely, and there was a brief but awkward silence while they all swallowed. Without attempting to explain I handed the order-book to the one at the head of the table. I left it to Fritz to do the talking. 'What was it you said?'"

Fritz.—You'll get a kick out of this. Use no hooks.

"Mr. Ribstone was so pleased and surprised that he at once asked us to sit down and gave the boys each a lozenge. I cannot give many details of the subsequent conference, for I did not understand much of it. At first we were at a standstill, for Mr. Ribstone seemed puzzled rather than reassured by Fritz's repetitions of 'Okay, chief.' "

Fritz.—I asked him to give us a break.

Otto.—He said he sure would, because business had been taking it right on the schnozzle.

My Wife.—He called in the elevator man, who was, he said, some kind of a Guinea and might help to interpret. With that person's assistance we got along better. These gentlemen were much interested in our story. At a time when trade was very bad we had brought in these valuable orders, which turned a deepening valley on their map into a nice little elevation.

Mr. Ribstone, who was generously affected by the story of the death of his salesman, insisted on giving me a bonus on those sales; a whole hundred dollars in cash. When he learned that I was an experienced typist he suggested that I might take a job in the office, but I realized that my ignorance of the language made that impossible. Instead, I asked if he could help us find a place to live.

"And that is how we are here," Gretchen said, looking proudly round a little back dining-room where we sat at a balcony above a sunny yard with two cats and an ailanthus tree. "The Ginger Cubes Company, in a period of prosperity, had bought up some property adjoining their factory, intending to enlarge their works. But this depression, so fortunate for us, had come along, and they had not proceeded with their plans. The factory is just round the corner, and here was this old house, belonging to them but idle and empty. Mr. Ribstone said we might

have it rent-free until we could afford to pay something for its use. He sent his office-boy round to show us the place and let us in. It was dirty and dilapidated, windows and doors boarded up, all stripped and ready for the wrecker, but it was a roof over our heads. We took possession at once. How proudly we thought of telling you of our triumph. Then when we tried to get back to the Giant Tree, to let you know what had happened, they would not let us enter the building.

"I need not try to describe our perplexity, our chagrin. You must have known the same.

"Now we had shelter, but still no way of earning a living. We spent part of Mr. Ribstone's hundred dollars in the purchase of second-hand mattresses and blankets, some food and a few tools and cooking utensils. In a deserted house in a region of factories I was very nervous. The nights particularly were alarming. How I longed for you, Paul, my natural protector, and

wondered what you must have thought of our disappearance. But I can see that your friends have taken good care of you."

Her eye dwelt upon Gazelle. I noticed approvingly that the latter, with her instinctive tact, was now sitting as close to Mr. Cameron as she had formerly done to me when we had lunch together. But I think she missed the beard.

"We were very anxious those dark nights," said Gretchen. "We made the barricades as secure as possible, and Fritz, with his usual cleverness, had the idea of cutting a loophole in the blockaded front doorway so that we could inspect any intruder in safety. To the eye of any passer-by it was obvious that the house was closed and not receiving visitors. Great then was our surprise when every now and then would come a quiet tap at the door. This happened most often in the evening, disquieting us all the more. We thought it prudent to pay no attention; yet, when we peered out through cracks

we could see that these callers were not hoodlums but quite good-looking people. Finally I could stand the mystery no longer. When I heard a discreet rapping one afternoon I went to the peephole. A gentleman was standing very close to the barrier. As soon as I appeared at the opening he said softly, 'Got anything good?' I was so startled I could only think of replying in Fritz's habitual phrase, 'Okay, chief.' Then I retired, but to my dismay he remained there a long while, knocking patiently from time to time.

"It was Fritz's quick wit that solved the mystery. He did our foraging for us, and had had some opportunity to study the ways of the town. 'They think we're a speecheasy,' he explained. 'Whenever anyone sees a house all shut and barricaded like this, they just naturally assume it's a drinking place.' Then I remembered the enthusiasm of the anthropoids when they saw the bottle of cognac.

"Our money was nearly gone, and we had to live. I gave Fritz a few dollars and the next time he went out he learned from an intelligent taxi-driver where to buy some liquor. He came back with a bottle of brandy, a bottle of very cheap whiskey, and some alcohol and chemicals for making gin in a washtub. I feared you would have been shocked by this, for I know you only approve the very best drinks, but we had to do what we could with the means at hand. And the next time a tap came at the door we were ready. 'Sure,' said Fritz, in answer to the question. 'Brandy, Scotch, Gin.' Gin, said the visitor. 'Twenty-five cents,' Fritz replied, and after receiving the coin handed him a tumbler-full through the opening."

Fritz.—No, Mamma. I didn't say twenty-five cents. I said two bits.

Otto.—We watched him to see if he would die.

My Wife.—Yes, we waited anxiously to see the effect of the home-made spirit on our first customer. He wandered away down the street as though in a daze. He paused as if meditating a return, rubbed his eyes, wavered a little; then thought better of it and went on.

Otto.—When he got to the corner he looked at both sides of the lamp-post, where the names of the streets are written.

My Wife.—That was the beginning of our business. You wouldn't believe how fast it grew. Soon we ventured to admit our customers indoors, where Fritz rigged up a little bar which concealed the bareness of our quarters. Gradually we cleaned and painted and got chairs and tables. We served sandwiches, and then I began to do a little cooking. I was afraid Mr. Ribstone might disapprove, but on the contrary. When I went to tell him about it he was delighted, and many of his staff come here for lunch several

times a week. You know I am a good cook, and my omelette Suisse has won quite a reputation in the neighborhood. At Mr. Ribstone's suggestion we kept the front of the house boarded up so that it looks abandoned. That adds an air of novelty and pleases the clients. Now we can afford to serve really good liquor, and business is fine. What a wonderful education it has been for the boys; no high school could compare with it, for most of our customers are highly cultivated people, artists and poets and important merchants. They talk with the boys and correct their grammar. Little Otto runs the vestiaire, answers the telephone, and sells cigarettes and Ginger Cubes. I am thinking of putting him into a suit with buttons, as they do in the big hotels in Geneva. Sometimes he even gets a small tip given him. Fritz orders all the supplies and helps me in the kitchen. We have two waiters busy in the dining room and a man at the bar. When I was sad about our prolonged separation,

Mr. Ribstone comforted me. He said I would be sure to see you eventually. Husbands get around to most of the speecheasies sooner or later, he said. Evidently he was right. Fritz, some of the best brandy for our new customers!"

XIV

I EMBRACED her again. Here was a new and strangely transformed Gretchen. So does the energizing American air work on simple European temperaments. I gazed at the comfortable café where everything was plain but delightfully clean and well disposed. While she had been talking she kept a watchful eye on everything, giving occasional instructions to the waiters or sending the boys to do errands. At one or two other tables people sat leisurely enjoying a civilized luncheon with bottles of Chianti. Over the fireplace I was surprised to see a vigorous portrait of the Viennese dramatist Grillparzer. She explained that this had been hung there by an eccentric artist who brought a group

of friends to dine one evening a week. They called themselves the Grillparzer Club and met there to encourage Viennese modes of thinking.

I began to realize that she had here the foundations of a considerable success. To the native Swiss talent for restaurant keeping she had added the élan of American vitality. I had not the heart to tell her that this humane and agreeable enterprise was illegal, for indeed I think she scarcely knew that that was so. She had never been outside the house since Mr. Ribstone settled her there, and I think her innocent idea was that in America all public eating-places were proscribed as a menace to domesticity. She supposed that a paternal government desired its citizens to eat always in the home and that it was merely the anticipation of good Swiss cooking that brought her customers in with such a cheerful air.

"But what have *you* been doing?" she asked me.

This was too much for Mr. Cameron, whose firm had been spending considerable money and more ingenuity in getting our little book announced in the newspapers.

"Didn't you see any of our advertising?" he asked in dismay.

She hadn't, of course; and certainly it had never occurred to Mr. Ribstone or any other of her clients to connect the vanished husband of whom she spoke so tenderly with the Swiss philosopher whose views were being discussed in editorials. Mr. Cameron produced a copy of the book and explained that this was the actual day of publication. Now it was my turn to be embraced, and we all drank the book's health.

"But is this the History of Human Reason?" Gretchen inquired as she puzzled over the title of the little volume. "How it has shrunk."

"No, my treasure," I explained. "This is something different; quite the opposite, even."

To account for the book we had to give some

description of the lecture trip. I do not believe that my wife ever did fully understand the circumstances of that journey, and while Gazelle reported it with animation I saw Gretchen's eyebrows gradually move upward at the repetition of those dangerous plural pronouns, *we*, *our*, and *us*. I do not think anything is ever gained by perplexing people unnecessarily, so I succeeded in substantially abridging the story. I remembered the lipstick I had bought for her so long before, and which I had carried in my pocket ever since as a sentimental reminder. I gave it to her, explaining the circumstances, and she was much moved by this little token.

Gazelle promised to have my things packed and sent down to me, for of course having found my lost sheep, I would not leave them again. But as I saw her out to her little yellow car, while Mr. Cameron was paying the check, she suddenly threw her arms about my neck and hugged me fiercely. I had never been able to

tame her habit of biting in moments of emotion. If it had not been for my thick beard I might really have been scarred. "Chutney, my darling darling," she whispered, "what shall I ever do without you?"

"Why, everything will be just the same," I said, surprised.

"Oh, yeah?" was her parting remark, one of those strange American phrases that defy lexicographers, in which the meaning seems to be conveyed entirely by intonation.

Now I settled myself seriously to the study of American civilization. It was clearly my duty, for Mr. Cameron was sending me clippings from the press in which to my embarrassment I found myself quoted as an authority on the subject. The dusty top floor of the old house was unused, and there I put a table and chair for writing. I sent to Geneva for the manuscript of my History and attempted to undertake its revision. In

the quiet forenoon hours, after my early coffee, things went well. Gretchen and the boys were busy at their tasks downstairs, and Human Reason seemed a congenial topic. But, I know not why, the noble theme of mortal ratiocination declines in glamour after the meridian is passed. Soon after midday I would hear rappings begin on the barricade below, the cheery voices of our clients announcing their choice of appetizers, the clatter of the cocktail shaker, the profitable clang of the register at the caisse. The rising fragrance of Gretchen's admirable grilled kidneys or veal cutlets broiled in Gruyère put a period to my application. Often Gazelle and Mr. Cameron came in for lunch, and we would sit down together like old times. Gazelle lamented that it was a shame not to accept the lecture invitations that were reaching her. "They're so surprised to hear of a lecturer that isn't an Englishman," she said, "they'd pay you a bonus." But I had no need of money, for we

were doing well in the restaurant and the little book was selling surprisingly. I felt I should stick to my work, and truly I had much thinking to do. It was not easy to introduce reservations into my History of Human Reason without stultifying the whole thesis; particularly at a time when everything seemed as unreasonable as possible. It was queer how all our affairs just then seemed to turn into profit. Mr. Cameron even wanted to buy the names and addresses of our clients to use as a mailing list for a book his firm was publishing.

It was an interesting paradox that though I myself had been constantly patronizing the illegitimate bodegas, I was disturbed to find my own family running one. I remember what a shock it was when my good Gretchen proudly showed me our lumps of sugar sealed up in little paper wrappers with our name printed on them, *Swiss Family Robinson*, and the address. She said that people would take away these lit-

tle wrappers and give them to their friends; and so they did. I brooded much on the problem whether, accepting the benefits of this country's humors, I ought to encourage the breaking of its laws.

It was mostly the thoughtful kind of people who came to our speecheasy, and I learned much by talking with them. They evidently enjoyed our peaceful bourgeois atmosphere. As I watched them sit comfortably at their meals, lingering until mid-afternoon or protesting regretfully when we closed sharp at 10 P. M., it was almost 'pathetic to see how they relished their brief emancipation. The keeper of a speecheasy who is strict about admissions sees mostly happy faces (almost all faces are handsome when they are happy) and even the softening intimations of romance. I wondered why the government preferred that its citizens should eat their meals at hasty lunch counters or in uproarious caverns of white tile? I concluded that

governments, probably with judgment, do not like people to sit and think and compare notes. It is safer for the government when they bustle about and immerse their wits in activity. And wine sharpens the awareness of man, clarifies his vision of wrongs and absurdities. Were the sorrows of the American people so great that they had always sought the wilder liquids, furious potations of corn and rye, to abolish reason quicker? But our clients were generally of a civilized temper, almost indistinguishable from Swiss. I began to see how much wisdom, sense, and quietness was below the foamy surface of American life. Their civilization is like beer, it has a big frothy head, but underneath it is clear, nourishing, and bitter. The intelligent people are rarely heard from, for (as one of their prophets said) they lead lives of quiet desperation. I perceived that perhaps the Book Club pundit had been right when he resented my superficial generalizations.

Meanwhile our boys were rapidly developing a characteristic Yankee shrewdness. Fritz was always clever in a mechanical way, and one day he took me aside and showed me an electric buzzer he had arranged. It sounded in various parts of the house and was operated by a button cunningly concealed under the carpet in a corner by the front entry. With increasing trade he had constituted himself our door-man, for he had a sharp memory for faces.

"I haven't told Mamma," he said, "for she doesn't know what it's all about. But if you ever hear that buzzer, get the stuff out of sight. It means the house is pinched."

I embraced the capable boy and praised him for his prudence.

Little Otto also showed an ingenious initiative. After the luncheon business was over Gretchen used to send him outdoors to walk about the city and get exercise. He was an observant child and learned much by watching the

extraordinary sights. To my amazement he told me one day that he wanted to start a Savings Bank account, for he had now earned five dollars. I learned, after some questioning, that he had noticed the daily rush of people passing wildly through a railway station in the late afternoon to catch trains. The excessive heat of the office buildings, the crowd in the subway, their own anxious hurry, made these tormented people very thirsty. Many would stop at the water-cooler in the waiting-room for a hasty drink before running to the train. They would put a penny in a slot to get a clean paper goblet. But paper cups, as everyone knows, make water taste very uninteresting. Little Otto borrowed a bottle of fruit syrup from behind our bar and took up his stand beside the paper-cup container. For an additional penny from the thirsty traveller he would pour in a small dose of syrup, which made the iced water as refreshing as a soda-fountain drink. He did so well

with this idea that he used to keep several bottles of fruit syrup in storage at the parcel room near by. He said that when the hot weather came it would be a gold-mine. He wished he had a little sister who could carry cups into the Ladies' Tuo where he could see through the doorway women exhausted by the ardors of shopping sitting dejectedly in rocking chairs.

I complimented the good little fellow on combining human charity with his zeal for profit, but I was puzzled at first by the term Tuo for what was obviously the Rest Room. Then I saw that he had read the reversed word OUT which was painted on the inner side of the glass door.

Fritz, however, was rather scornful in the manner of an older brother. "*Alpha*, you haven't deducted the cost of the syrup, and, *beta*, if it gets really profitable the drug stores will give you the razz. They've got an exclusive concession for that sort of thing."

I also went for walks round the city. I have never had any taste for merely trivial belles lettres, holding that it is a writer's duty to attempt the improvement of mankind. It is a remarkable privilege to live in a young civilization while it is learning a lesson. All that winter, which was a hard one, it seemed to me that these people, however resentfully, were settling down to patient thrift and might yet enter into the companionship of other and less gifted nations who had suffered even more than themselves. It is the custom in America for the unemployed to sell apples on the streets, and while this may be relatively useless as an amelioration of distress, or (as some said) a clever dodge of the Fruitgrowers' Chamber of Commerce, yet in some queer way the continual sight of the red fruit, symbol of man's first perplexity, did seem to bring the mind back to simple fundamentals. I still observed monstrous grotesqueries, but I almost learned to love them; I saw this fantas-

tic people destroying itself in the very excess of its own enthusiasms. Gazelle told me that a national holiday, such as the Fourth of July, was as dangerous to the country as a large-sized battle; and sure enough I read later that on that occasion, by drownings, motor accidents, and fireworks, nearly four hundred people perished annually. I saw the people cheering themselves by putting up more and more terrific buildings, making them now of bright colors, sparkling with silvery metals and all shades of tile and glass. I was always fascinated by the excavation where a new structure was to rise. As they dug deeper and deeper into it, there emerged the fundamental rock of Manhattan that had been there from the beginnings of geology. What might that ancient rock think in the brief time it lay bare to sunlight? In only a few days it was covered again with their intricate puzzle-work of numbered and fitted girders. Would it again see the light in twenty or thirty years.

when men would drill deeper for heavier burdens still? With difficulty I scrambled down into one of these pits one evening, to pick up a small nugget of rock as a symbol. A watchman halted me roughly and was ill satisfied by my explanation that I only wanted a little bit of the original New York. When I saw our well-remembered Giant Tree, now finished, shine at night against clear sky, I had to believe that men who could build these astonishments would also learn to control their hitherto unbridled energies of production and competition. If not, the future was terrible indeed. So I pondered these gigantic phenomena as best I knew how; and smaller ones too, studying the minor technique of living. I learned, for instance, when not to pass a man from behind on the outer side, close to the curb; becoming wary to detect, from a certain posture of the head, that he was about to relieve an excess of saliva.

When the spring warmed and brightened the

world my literary task grew more difficult. I was restless, and I realized I was probably too soft for the terrific concentration required by philosophical writing. For to write to any purpose about life one must shut out life altogether. The easy old job of filing and indexing had required little thought. And what was gained by thinking? Did it not lead only to melancholy, or to unseemly laughter? Also I was uneasy about my good Gretchen, who had worked incessantly and was fatigued. And my conscientious doubts about the ethics of making a living unlawfully were bothering me gravely. Perhaps Gretchen and I were both a little homesick. The ponds in Central Park, where we sometimes walked on Sundays, were an unsatisfying substitute for our exquisite Lake of Geneva with its mountain reredos; though the boys, now become fanatically American, insisted that the profile of those high apartment houses was as thrilling as the Alps. But disconcerting as this life was, I

had no desire to return to Geneva. After one experience of the Atlantic Ocean nothing could induce Gretchen or me to cross it again. Fresh water would do for us.

I suppose I may have intimated these thoughts to Gazelle, from whom it was useless to try to conceal anything. "You need a day in the country," she said, and one hot Sunday morning at the end of May she and Mr. Cameron turned up in the yellow car and said they were going to take us for a picnic. Gretchen and I were dovetailed into a small compartment at the back, known as a rumbling seat, and off we went.

That rear seat was well named. As usual, engineers and contractors had been making merry on the highways, and after crossing a gigantic bridge we encountered long stretches of devastation, through a region of dismal purlieus, where only the tightness of our juxtaposture kept my wife and me from oscillating out of the vehicle. Through a small window we could see

Gazelle and Mr. Cameron talking gaily while with a roar of gears and the saltations of an ibex the yellow car jounced over craters and past signs saying *Road Closed: Proceed At Your Own Risk*. Swiss dentistry never contemplated such quassation, and I felt a filling loosen. Then with sudden contrast we found ourselves in an endless procession of cars streaking along a broad and perfect cement causeway. Mile after mile we flashed, pausing only for occasional red signals, running presently into a country of green fields and announcements of Mr. Ribstone's Ginger Cubes. It was strangely level and evidently traversed by people of reckless appetite, for the way was lined almost continuously with stalls of sausages and sweets. But how might the hungry ever pull aside from that solid chain of speed? Instantly behind us always drummed another motor, as we ourselves whirled at the tail of the one before. Like a furious army on the march, like a tribe in migra-

tion, the long train of vehicles twinkled in discipline, halting together at crossings, springing forward again in unison. Many alluring byways opened up, leading to unfrequented shades, but none diverted; the lust of distance drew the whole caravan on in streams of joy. The rumbling seats of other cars were filled with young people in bathing suits, already burned scarlet with sunshine. Even Gretchen and I grew excited with this mass passion of going. "On, on!" I cried, and quivered with impatience when we were forced to halt.

It was a long ride, but eventually, after passing through a pleasant forest, we shot alongside a rustic bathing pavilion and stopped. As Gretchen and I hoisted ourselves stiffly from the seat, Gazelle remarked, "You said you wanted to see some fresh water."

And so we reached an American paradise. A small circular lake whose name I cannot spell nor pronounce is approached by a road with-

out any apparent speed limitation and completely surrounded by hot sausages, cold ice cream, and petrol pumps. It is coursed over by small boats of incredible speed and audibility; they draw very little water, so that if they come right at you it is quite possible to escape injury if you duck deep enough. When these are off duty a hydroplane keeps the bathers alert. The blazing beach of fine white sand is almost invisible under the throng of happy people comforted by proximity. The cars are thoughtfully parked in the shade of the woods, for fear their enamel will be sunburned. An endless succession of people climb high ladders to cast themselves down steep polished slides, striking the water with splashes and yells.

As we gazed upon this carnival of human hilarity I knew at last what I wanted to do. Gretchen had the same thought, we looked at each other with a mutual vision. It had been plain to me for some time that if one were to

choose a legitimate industry there are obviously three great fields where success is sure. Plumbing, iceboxes, and motor cars are the great American passions. It must be something to do with one of these.

"We'll give up the speecheasy," I said, "and run a Filling Station."

The sequel to this great day was tragic. We returned home late and weary after rolling for hours in an innumerable congress of motors, but I was congratulating myself on my idealism in abandoning our profitable and illegal trade. We found a strange notice posted on the door and a federal agent waiting for us. The boys were in tears. "The place is pinched," said Fritz.

XV

I WOULD rather not linger on the horrid episodes that followed: the confiscation of our goods, the heavy amercement that wiped out my poor Gretchen's laborious savings, the copious publicity and disgrace that threatened to end my career as a writer—although, strangely enough, it pleased Mr. Cameron and increased the sale of the book. The tabulated newspapers took me up as a phenomenon, and even my poor lecture tour with Gazelle was reconstructed in a vein of roguish conjecture. Indeed, I became, for a few days, almost a national figure while the press was trying to decide whether I was a Misunderstood Philosopher or a Roughneck

Rousseau in a Helvetian Hideaway. They all agreed, however, that I was evidently a comic figure. My only consolation was that Gretchen was not able to read the papers.

Gazelle's father and Mr. Ribstone both came to our aid and were amazingly kind, procuring us expert legal counsel. One technicality that arose was the discovery that I had no passport (never having expected to land here) and there was some danger that we would all be deported as undesired aliens. But the painful details of that *cause célèbre* I prefer not to recall. It subsided with fortunate suddenness, and I peacefully entered the ranks of one of the most curiously assorted fraternities in America, the Front Page Alumni. Gazelle, whose newspaper photographs did not do her justice, was alternately indignant and amused. She pointed out the characteristic paradox that seems to lurk at the bottom of all this country's phenomena.

"You're so thoroughly disgraced, my poor dar-

ling, you could make your fortune out of it." She urged me to accept some of the innumerable vaudeville and journalistic offers that now reached us. I did in fact sell a small diary of impressions I had kept on our lecture tour for enough to pay the lawyers' fees. But for the future my mind was made up. ·

Through the good offices of Mr. Ribstone we found what we wanted. On one of the southern highways of Long Island, strategically handy to a traffic light, where cars can see the place when they are forced to halt, is the League of Nations Filling Station—Filling, Service, Comfort. The bright flags of all countries flutter in the warm Long Island breeze and attract much attention. We have the usual array of red, green, white and yellow petrol pumps that stand like totems or strange Polynesian idols in front of the little temple itself. Here, as at a wayside shrine, the worshippers of Internal Combustion pause for obeisance and repairs. I had the place built in

the classic style, suggesting a pious symbolism, for indeed the Filling Station is the true chapel of the American folk. With Fritz's quick-witted help we have neglected none of the conventional requirements: we have the usual signs, CRANKCASE SERVICE FREE and FLATS FIXED, and when there is a price-cutting flurry a notice that used to shock me until I understood it, 7 GALS FOR \$1, CASH ONLY. I like to think that the myriads who pass, even if they do not stop, observe the name of our station and think more seriously of the League—which is, after all, precisely a free crankcase service in international matters. I do not understand engineering details myself; for that we hire competent mechanics, who wear white smocks with the monogram *L of N* stitched on them by Gretchen's good fingers. But the operation of the pumps is simple enough, and often I have an opportunity to say a cheery word about the duty of the United States in

world politics. I only wish that more Western congressmen came motoring on Long Island.

We have an airy rest room with window boxes of geraniums, where we keep the radio playing incessantly, though I avert my ears during that evening number which has such painful memories of the airship tragedy. For it is man's duty, I now believe, to help relieve the ether of its heavy burden of kilocycles. One day when a speech of my old idol M. Briand was being re-broadcast from Geneva we stopped all business and insisted on our customers listening with us. In a rack near the pumps we keep free copies of the *Christian Science Monitor*, a paper distinguished for its interest in international relations. It is surprising how many people in the back seats of cars would rather read than look at the scenery. To run up the flags every fine morning, to put out the bottles of oil where they gleam like carafes of wine in the sunlight, to see the great tide of comedy pour by and be busy

without painful thinking, this is my idea of peace.

And adjoining is the Dog Wagon, which is Gretchen's happy responsibility. I think our customers will testify that there are no fresher and sweeter frankfurters or hamburgers, no cleaner ice-cream cones; and no pleasanter loitering place than the little garden behind the summer lunch-stand where you can eat more leisurely. Little Otto is very apt at serving the counter, where we keep a prominent display of Ginger Cubes and all the other small mastications the Americans need. Gretchen's Swiss Cheese Sandwich is famous all along the Sunrise Highway (National Route Number 27 on your road-map).

In our humble way I think we contribute something to ease humanity's passage on its mysterious pilgrimage. True I do not believe that a very high proportion of our customers are bound on errands of profound or delicate import; oc-

casionally I see some who are only too plainly inflecting or conjugating the plural of spouse, and sometimes I dare say we unconsciously grease the wheels of folly. But a true philosopher grows more tardy of judgment. We pay a high rent for our location, but even so we are doing well. When Otto is old enough to take Fritz's place, Fritz intends to be a taxi-driver; it is a hard calling but one that affords shrewd observation of life. Only the other day Otto took a windshield wiper to pieces and mended it. That would have been unimaginable a year ago. Come to think of it, that is what a philosopher should be, a windshield wiper for humanity. My dear Gretchen's only sadness is that the electrical manufacturer made her big automatic icebox with so large a door that every time it is opened (and it has to be opened almost constantly in the lunch-wagon business) so much hot air rushes in that the motor starts again. Thus the motor runs all day long, and that

means a big electric bill. I agreed with her that it seemed foolish of the icebox makers; it hardly seemed necessary to explain my own notion that these matters have all been carefully thought out by the power utilities.

The other day a charming thing happened. Gazelle and Mr. Cameron drove out in the yellow roadster. "Chutney, weren't you a parson once?" she asked me. I admitted that I was. "We want you to marry us," she said.

Gretchen was delighted, but I felt a little uncertain of my lines. "My dear child," I said, "I'm afraid I'm pretty rusty in the marriage service."

"Nonsense," she replied. "This is a service station, isn't it? Anyhow, I'll trust you. If it takes as well as it did with you and Gretchen we'll have no kick coming."

So we did our best. The bride and groom stood up in the little arbor behind the lunch-room and Gretchen said afterward that Gazelle

looked simply adorable in a silk serge with a top-of-the-hip length jacket. If my clean white filling-station smock was a little informal as a surplice, the Power that understands all things will not reproach us. I married them with Gretchen and our boys as witnesses, and I cannot think of any more prettily symbolic surroundings for such a modern couple. We had a gay wedding breakfast of hamburgers on toast and Eskimo Pie, and meanwhile Fritz had filled their car with oil and the best ethyl gas (No Knocks) and pumped up the tires, as a nuptial present.

Mr. Cameron, who was speechless with happiness, pressed a gold coin into my hand as the parson's fee, and I am going to wear it on my watch-chain.

I kissed the bride—the first time I had ever really done so, though Gretchen does not believe this—and she gave my beard an affectionate twist. "You old darling," said Gazelle, "I told

Cam I wouldn't marry him unless he'd promise to publish the History of Human Reason when you get it ready."

"My dear," I said, "it will never be published."

They whirled away down the road, on their own Sunrise Highway; and my wife and I embraced with a sentimental wetness in our eyes.

"Gretchen," said I, "I think I'll take a little bicarbonate of soda."

THE END

REHEARSAL

REHEARSAL

Once upon a time, the early 1920's, Frank Shay had a bookshop on Christopher Street in Greenwich Village. It occupied what had once been the back-room of the saloon where John Masefield was a helper. Those who speak of Mr. Masefield having been a bartender are surely in error: he did not rise as high as that. He cleaned the brasswork.

At any rate Mr. Shay's bookshop became famous in those days, and even did a little publishing on the side: it pleases me to remember that such writers as Pearsall Smith, Edna Millay and William McFee appeared in fugacious editions under Frank Shay's imprint.

Frank had a particular interest in the drama, and did some play-editing on the side. He was collecting *A Treasury of Plays for Women*, to be published by Little, Brown in 1922; an ingenious idea which he had sold to the publisher before he knew whether or not there were enough plays (with only female parts) to fill a good-sized book. He happened to tell me that he was having difficulty in finding suitable pieces, and of course I volunteered to do one.

I still think the little skit was rather shrewd; by representing it as a rehearsal of a play at a girls' college all problems of sets, costumes, and masculines, are abolished. I suppose I must have been reading something by Synge, which accounts for the Irish flavor. Or perhaps it was chosen just to tease Frank Shay. Many amateur players have found it useful; and I am prompted to add that it may not be publicly performed without permission from (and payment of a minuscule royalty to) the agents, Longmans Green & Co., 114 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

This play introduces the curious problem of drowned bodies: male float one way and female another; but I always forget which. I hope I got it correct? Any playwright of Celtic gloom ought to know.

REHEARSAL

SCENE

Rehearsal of a play to be given by a college dramatic club.

This is, as far as the setting is concerned, the easiest play to produce that you ever heard of. It requires only a bare stage, several plain chairs and a small table. Whatever is the natural and unadorned condition of your stage, leave it so. Nor are any special costumes necessary: the characters may attire themselves as suits their fancy and condition in life. The scene represents a rehearsal of an amateur play—I mean, a play performed by amateurs. As a matter of fact, the play they are at work on is supposed to be one of those Irish peasantry things. I have imagined the characters as being college girls, in whom is apparent that pleasing mixture of hilarity and importance characteristic of the sex in youth. However, it being to the author's interest that this play should be performed as frequently as possible, I will remark that by the change of a word or so here and there it is equally valid for girls' schools or clubs of high-spirited ladies.

The house lights having been turned off, and the footlights on, as usual, the audience, eager to be entertained, attentively waits the rise of the curtain. But before the curtain goes up, the gutter is again darkened; so that for a moment the audience thinks

REHEARSAL

some mistake has been made. This impression is perhaps confirmed when the curtain immediately rises upon the naked stage, which is adequately lit from above, but seems rather gloomy without the usual shine of the footlights.

Enter Freda, the director and manager, a brisk young person who enjoys her responsibility and takes it seriously. She carries a typescript, which she lays on the table at the front of the stage—the sacred little table which still holds an empty jug and a glass to remind one that not long ago some British celebrity spent a happy evening lecturing there. Freda moves the table to one side, and rapidly begins to arrange the chairs (which are standing in a row at the back) in a calculated pattern. She puts four of them close together toward the back of the stage; and two, a little distance apart, one behind the other, toward the right side; two, similarly, toward the left. Two or three chairs she sets with thoughtful precision in other places within the area thus marked out.

Enter Christine, Barbara, and Sonia, all carrying scripts.

FREDA

Hullo, where's Gertrude?

CHRISTINE

She'll be here, I guess.

FREDA

She'd better be, or I'll get someone else to do her part. She doesn't seem to realize we've got to *play* this thing a week from to-night.

REHEARSAL

BARBARA

Horrid thought!

FREDA

Well, while we await the prima donna, let's get to work. Now you know your lines, we can develop some business.

SONIA

I wish you'd picked out some other play; this is so dreadfully gloomy. It'll put the audience into a morbid melancholy.

CHRISTINE

Yes, and there's some pretty strong stuff in it, too. My father and mother are going to be here, and really, I think one ought to be careful about saying some of these things before parents——

FREDA

You ought to be glad it's gloomy. People don't respect you if you play comedy. This kind of thing is much more artistic. Besides, don't blame me. The Professor of English Literature chose it; I didn't.

CHRISTINE

I know—but just looking at things from the parents' standpoint, English Literature is awfully outspoken sometimes.

SONIA

I'm glad my people live so far away there's no chance of their coming to the show.

REHEARSAL

BARBARA

Think of me, I have to play the stricken old father, brooding over his shame. You try being a stricken old father——

FREDA

Come, now, we're wasting time.

(Enter Marjorie, carrying a hammer, a paint pot and brush, electric bulbs, a roll of canvas, and a dingy old suit of masculine garments.)

MARJORIE

Look here, what the deuce am I going to do for "moonlight through cottage window"? I can't get an arc light anywhere. D'you suppose ordinary frosted bulbs will do?

FREDA

Don't bother *me*. That's your affair. Lord knows I've got enough to manage.

MARJORIE

Well, will these do for the stricken old father?
(Holds out horrible old trousers and coat.)

FREDA

Hurrah! Just the thing. *(Takes trousers and holds them against Barbara, who views them with much distaste.)* A perfect fit!

BARBARA

Have I got to wear those things?

MARJORIE

I got them from the janitor.

REHEARSAL

FREDA

Better put them on right away, and get used to them.

(Barbara shudders.)

MARJORIE

Yes, atmosphere, local colour——

BARBARA

From the local coloured man. No, thanks.

(She deposits trousers gingerly at one side of stage.

Enter Gertrude, carrying script.)

GERTRUDE

Sorry to be late.

(Marjorie goes to rear of stage, and occupies herself quietly with paint and canvas while the rehearsal proceeds.)

FREDA

All right, now we can go ahead. I've put these chairs to show essentials of scenery. These *(indicating chairs at the back)* are the hearth. This *(to two chairs at one side)* is a door; this *(to two chairs on other side)* is another door. This *(to another chair, toward the rear)* is the window where the moonlight comes in. And here *(to another chair)* is the wheel-chair where the stricken old parent sits disconsolate.

CHRISTINE

There are going to be some stricken parents in the audience, too.

FREDA *(ignoring her)*

Now get the scene well in mind. *(Reads from her script:)* "A poor cottage in the Irish bogs.

REHEARSAL

At the back, a faint glimmer of a scanty fire of peat on the hearth, with a pile of kelp drying beside it."

MARJORIE

Where am I going to get any kelp? What is kelp, anyway?

FREDA

Seaweed.

MARJORIE

I wonder if spinach would be all right?

FREDA (*continues to read*)

"Through rear window, a clear beam of moonlight. In a wheel-chair by a lamp sits Shawn O'Connell, a stricken old man, reading the Bible. The setting indicates an atmosphere of extreme wretchedness and misery. From the shadows near the hearth, where Norah has flung herself prostrate in despair, comes an occasional low keening." (*Christine and Sonia look humorously at Gertrude, who plays the part of Norah.*) Are you ready? Places! (*Barbara sits down in one of the chairs; Gertrude, with a shamefaced air, lies down on the chairs assembled at the back, Christine and Sonia retire to one side of the stage, off the chair-marked area, and solemnly consult their scripts. Freda sits down at the little table, on the other side of the stage.*) Curtain! (*There is a short pause, while Barbara gazes pensively at her hands, which she holds spread to represent a large book. Gertrude utters a low moan. It is not a success.*) You'll have to keen better than that. Throw a little agony into it.

REHEARSAL

GERTRUDE (*sits up*)

Can't we have the footlights on? I can do much better then. It seems to make it more real.

FREDA

Good idea. Chris, switch 'em on.

(*Christine exit. The footlights go on, and Christine returns.*) We've got to get into the spirit of this thing. Try to imagine the audience out there. (*She waves toward the auditorium.*) Imagine the place crowded with intelligent faces—proud parents, interested friends, hopeful young men——

BARBARA

I'm damned if I want to wear trousers before a mixed audience——

FREDA

Don't be so mid-Woodrovian. Look here, I told you to bring something to use as a Bible. What did you make me director for if you're not going to obey orders? Wait a minute, I'll find something. (*She rushes off.*)

GERTRUDE

Tell me if this sounds any better. (*She utters several throbbing, tremulous wails.*)

CHRISTINE

Somehow it doesn't seem to carry conviction.

SONIA

You must try to imagine terrible things. Imagine you've flunked Physics.

REHEARSAL

GERTRUDE

The trouble is, it's so hard to find any place to practise keening. I tried it in my room late at night, and the watchman sent for a doctor.

MARJORIE

I wish Freda wouldn't insist on that moonlight.

GERTRUDE

I simply can't keen in cold blood. It'll be all right when the audience is here.

SONIA

You're too self-conscious. You'll never be a great actress.

GERTRUDE

You'd be self-conscious, too, if you had to play this part before parents and younger brothers.

CHRISTINE

Younger brothers are the devil. They're as bad as Doctor Freud.

SONIA

Write and tell them there's smallpox in town.
(*Reënter Freda, carrying large telephone directory.*)

FREDA (*to Barbara*)

Here you are—the Telephone Book. It's the only thing I could find. Come, now, places!

BARBARA (*produces a clay pipe*)

I thought that if I used this pipe, it would help me to get the illusion. (*Puts it in her mouth and sits down with the directory.*)

REHEARSAL

FREDA

Curtain!

(*Barbara sits in the "wheel-chair," turning over the leaves of the directory, and awkwardly holding the pipe in her mouth. Gertrude is lying, face down, with her head buried in her arms, on the chairs at the back. She utters a dire dreadful moaning occasionally.*)

BARBARA

Has Herself come yet?

GERTRUDE (*sobbing*)

Not yet. Nor never will, I'm thinking.

BARBARA (*gravely, with the tremulous voice of old age, but having great trouble to keep the pipe in her mouth while she speaks*) Fifty year and five it is that I'm living in this place, and never before now did shame come down upon the home of the O'Connell. (*Gertrude utters only a low wail.*) Be leaving off your keening, my girl, I'll be having no stomach to my supper. Is that broth cooked?

GERTRUDE (*gets up languidly and pretends to look at the hearth*) No, Father.

BARBARA

Come away out of the darkness, now, and let me be seeing you. (*Gertrude comes forward, slowly and shamefully, and crouches at Barbara's feet. Barbara tries to light her pipe.*) See how all the names are written here in the Book—names of the O'Connell, all numbered in the Good Book. (*Christine and Sonia cannot restrain a giggle.*)

REHEARSAL

Thirteen childer and never a word of shame agin one of them. Francey, Padraic, Finn, Bridget, Cathleen, Dennis. Think of Dennis, now, who killed three Englishmen in one Sunday. This has been a proud house, surely.

GERTRUDE

I'm thinking that the broth will soon be ready, Father.

BARBARA

God be praised, I'm after keeping my appetite in spite of all this sorrow. (*Points to page in the book.*) Thirteen childer, six dead of the bog fever, three drowned in the fishing, two in jail for the republic, one gone to America—all numbered in the Book.

CHRISTINE (*to Sonia*)

Call Columbus 8200.

FREDA (*angrily*)

Shhhh!

BARBARA (*in her own voice*)

I've forgotten my lines. It isn't fair of the author to give any one a speech as long as this one.

GERTRUDE

It doesn't matter. The audience never listens to the first five minutes. They're busy climbing over each other's feet.

FREDA (*rapping on table*)

How do you expect to get this thing across if you make a joke out of it?

REHEARSAL

BARBARA

I simply can't talk with this pipe in my mouth.
It's funny—I've often seen men do it.

FREDA (*reading from her script*)

"I am an old man——"

BARBARA

Oh, yes. (*Resumes her part.*) I am an old man,
and shamed in my own house. I am after look-
ing for the third chapter of Isaiah. Does Isaiah
come *after* Jeremiah or before it? I never can
remember.

GERTRUDE

Yourself had thirteen childer, Father, and if
only one goes to hell, it's no bad proportion at
all——

BARBARA

Whisht, whisht, Norah—is it the Bad Place
Yourself is speaking of? Don't be naming that
place to an old stricken man that maybe will
have had sins of his own to be shriven. It's
perished with hunger I am.

GERTRUDE (*rises, goes to chairs at the back and stoops
over the imaginary fire*)

Which is it that is troubling you more, Father:
the shame or the supper?

BARBARA (*absently turning over pages of the directory*)

The third chapter of Isaiah. There's something
about mantles and wimples and crisping pins.

GERTRUDE

Crisping pins, is it? Devil a crisping pin did
I ever see in this house.

REHEARSAL

BARBARA (*reads*)

"Because the daughters of Zion walk with stretched forth necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, and making a tinkling with their feet . . . the Lord will take away the bravery of their tinkling ornaments . . . the chains and the bracelets and the mufflers, the bonnets and the ornaments of the legs . . . the rings and nose jewels, the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles and the wimples and the crisping pins. . . . And it shall come to pass that instead of sweet smell there shall be stink; and instead of well-set hair baldness; and instead of a stomacher——" Sure, Norah, isn't that broth ready?

GERTRUDE

Here it is, Father. (*Comes forward, carrying an imaginary bowl, which she sets down on an imaginary table beside Barbara, and pretends to set out imaginary dishes, spoons, etc.*)

FREDA (*interrupting*)

That's rotten! Barbara, you've got to be more tragic. Read that with more feeling.

BARBARA

I don't like reading the Old Testament. It's—well, it's so vulgar——

FREDA (*going to her*)

Let me show you how that ought to go. Remember you're a broken old man. (*Takes the directory and sits down in Barbara's chair; assumes a quavering and senile solemnity, and pretends to read from the book, improvising the speech*

REHEARSAL

from memory.) Because the daughters of Zion walk with stretched forth legs and wanton stomachs the Lord will take away John J. Wimple plumber and steamfitter and instead of crimping pins there shall be Henry Wiesenfeldt Audubon-6543. (*Rises.*) There, do you see? More pathos!

MARJORIE

Just a minute! I hadn't heard about all these muffers and wimples and crimping pins—they aren't actual props, are they?

GERTRUDE

No, no, you poor fish. They're only mentioned.

MARJORIE

Well, how was I to know? Freda never gave me a copy of the script to look over. If anything goes wrong, it won't be my fault.

FREDA

Attention, please! Now go on with it from there. (*Barbara resumes her place in the chair.*)

BARBARA

Where were we? These interruptions get my goat.

FREDA

"Here it is, Father."

GERTRUDE

Here it is, Father. (*Again brings imaginary soup from the rear, and serves it as before. Barbara pretends to spoon it up with gusto.*) Leave off feeding till I fix your napkin. Herself might

REHEARSAL

be coming in, and you wouldn't want to be all speckled with the soup——

BARBARA

There's darker stains than spilling a little broth on your breastbone. Yourself might be thinking of the daughters of Zion.

GERTRUDE

Perhaps the daughters of Zion were not brought up all alone in the bogs, with no company but the moonlight and an old man dripping his soup. It's more of soup you are thinking than of salvation. Surely it's bitter.

BARBARA (*after a pause*)

It *is* bitter. You've maybe dropped some of the kelp in it. (*A pause.*) I'll be telling you the truth, I'm destroyed altogether with thirst. If you'd be slipping over to the shebeen to bring me a dram——

GERTRUDE (*goes to the chair that represents a window, and pretends to look out*)

Here comes Herself now, God help us, and a foreigner with her. Be easy and go on with your supper. I'll be passing into the loft. (*She starts to the chair-doorway, right, and then impulsively returns to Barbara. Piteously.*) Oh, Daddy, you'll not be thinking too hard of your Norah?

BARBARA (*still eating*)

It's grand fine soup. (*Gertrude goes through chair-doorway, right, and stands near Freda. Christine and Sonia come to chair-doorway, left,*

REHEARSAL

and Sonia taps on the stage with her foot, to represent knocking at the door.) Who's that, God help us? *(Christine and Sonia enter.)* Ah, it's yourself, Mrs. O'Toole, and a foreigner with you.

CHRISTINE

Yes. An English lady, God help her.

BARBARA

Come in and be set.

CHRISTINE

Surely it's quare and cold to-night, Shawn, and the bogs in the moonshine as white as soap.

BARBARA

Yes, I've finished my soup, thank you kindly.

CHRISTINE

A sorrowful night to be lying drowned in the bogs, I'm thinking. I mind the time when Katie O'Shaughnessy perished herself in the marsh. She floated face under, God help her, and they said it was because she was ashamed to look her Maker in the face. Indeed, I don't wonder, with nothing on her but a shift.

BARBARA

The men folk float face upwards, Mrs. O'Toole.

CHRISTINE

To be sure you ought to know the rights of it, what with three sons floating in at the high tide. *(To Sonia.)* We waked them all together, and Father Daly ran short on candles.

REHEARSAL

SONIA

Mr. O'Connell, I'm afraid I have dreadful news for you——

BARBARA

Indeed, ma'am, bad news is an old friend in this house of shame. (*Plaintively.*) If I had a drop of spirits it would be a consolation.

FREDA (*interrupting*)

Fine! That's fine! (*The actors relax, and stand at ease.*) I don't think your Irish brogue is very good, but you're beginning to get the spirit of the thing.

CHRISTINE

Yes, if we can do it like this I think the audience ought to be sufficiently depressed.

FREDA

We won't need to go over the part where the young Englishman's body is brought in, and Norah commits suicide. By the way, Marjorie, what are you going to do for the young Englishman's body?

MARJORIE

Oh, I'm going to play that myself. My only chance of glory.

FREDA

All right, then—we'll take it again from the beginning down to where Sonia and Christine come in.

SONIA

I don't think that's fair. You never give me a chance to rehearse the only decent bit I have.

REHEARSAL

BARBARA

Oh, rot, Sonia! Your stuff is a cinch. You don't even have to talk Irish.

GERTRUDE

Yes, for Heaven's sake let's do that first part again while we've got it hot. If I don't get used to watching Barbara I shall burst into yells of laughter——

BARBARA

Considering I have the rottenest part in the whole show, I think I do fairly well.

SONIA

Some people are certainly hard to please. Your part is the only one with a chance for any real acting. Pretty fat, I call it.

CHRISTINE

I agree with Sonia. We ought to rehearse the last half as often as we can. That bit where I have to break the news to the old man needs some doing. That seems to me the real crux of the play, and I don't feel at all sure of it yet.

MARJORIE

I thought you were going to check up that list of props with me. Here I've been hanging around——

FREDA

Ye gods, you girls think of no one but yourselves. Can't you forget your own parts for a moment and think of the good of the show?

REHEARSAL

SONIA

I don't care, you've skimped my part right along, and never give me a decent chance to rehearse. I know damn well you want me to flivver——

BARBARA

Sonia can have my part whenever she wants it. I'm fed up with the stricken old parent and his house of shame——

GERTRUDE (*looking at her wrist watch*)

Well, what's the dope? I haven't got all day——

MARJORIE

You people make me tired. All wanting to grab off the footlight stuff. Suppose some of you lend *me* a hand in building the scenery.

FREDA (*angrily*)

Who's directing this play, I'd like to know? You put it up to me, didn't you? *Somebody's* got to run things——

CHRISTINE

It was asinine to pick out a fool play like this. Why not something with some fun in it?

FREDA

Who ever heard of a one-act play with any fun in it? They don't write 'em. A one-act play *has* to be artistic——

SONIA

All I can say is, I hate to see an innocent audience suffer.

REHEARSAL

GERTRUDE

I know I'll *never* be able to live down this house of shame business with my young brothers. They'll be kidding me about it for the next five years.

SONIA

Come on now, all together—can't we do something else instead? Honestly, Freda, we'd rehearse all night for the next week if you'll choose something really decent——

FREDA

Don't be absurd. The announcements have gone out.

SONIA

I bet the damn thing will be a hideous failure——

FREDA

Now let's be sensible. I know exactly how you all feel. Putting on a play is just like going to the dentist—the worst part is beforehand. When the fatal evening comes, no one will suspect the agony we've been through. I bet the house will give us a big hand—even the younger brothers.

BARBARA

Freda's right. Come on, children, a little courage!

FREDA

We'll do the second part of the play at the next rehearsal. This time we'd better stick to what we've been doing, and get it set. Places!

REHEARSAL

BARBARA

Give the stricken old father time to light his pipe. (*As she fumbles with the pipe, the others take their positions—Freda at the little table; Marjorie at the rear; Christine and Sonia down-stage, left; Gertrude on the chairs toward the back; and Barbara then sits down with the telephone directory.*)

FREDA

Curtain!

(*And, as Barbara turns over the leaves of the book, and Gertrude utters her first "keen," the curtain falls.*)

MANDARIN IN MANHATTAN

MANDARIN IN MANHATTAN

The Old Mandarin was to me a voice rather than a figure until Mr. Gluyas Williams represented him so amusingly in pictures; now I find it hard to visualize him any other way. I wish he visited me more often, for usually he has something to say which I need to consider. As he put it (while sitting in Bickford's lunchroom on p. 65) there is a twinge of venom in his canticles.

He was born in a rolltop desk in a Philadelphia newspaper office. The motivating impulse was Mr. Pearsall Smith sending me from London, in the autumn of 1918, a copy of Arthur Waley's delightful volume of genuine translations called *170 Chinese Poems*. Oriental imitations in various forms of free verse were fashionable in those days, and regarded with much gravity by Harriet Monroe and Amy Lowell and other determined patrons. But from Mr. Waley I learned that the ancient Chinese poets themselves were both wise and humorous. The pseudo-translations, which began as a mild satire of local free versifiers, developed a mood and personality of their own. But it was not until the Mandarin came to New York that he really found a landscape bizarre enough to move him deeply. I'm sorry the old stone well-head on 47th Street has disappeared (he mentions it on p. 36) for I always used to imagine him hiding in it when pursued by the occasional and justly indignant reader who had spotted all his mischief. The one about Father Healy's racing donkey, for instance, which caused some agitation in the *Saturday Review of Literature*: or even the tender lament about Sinus Trouble, mercifully enigmatic to all except etymologists. I have sometimes thought that I should have acknowledged that the disturbing fable of the Overcoat (p. 66) was told me as a true story by M. André Maurois.

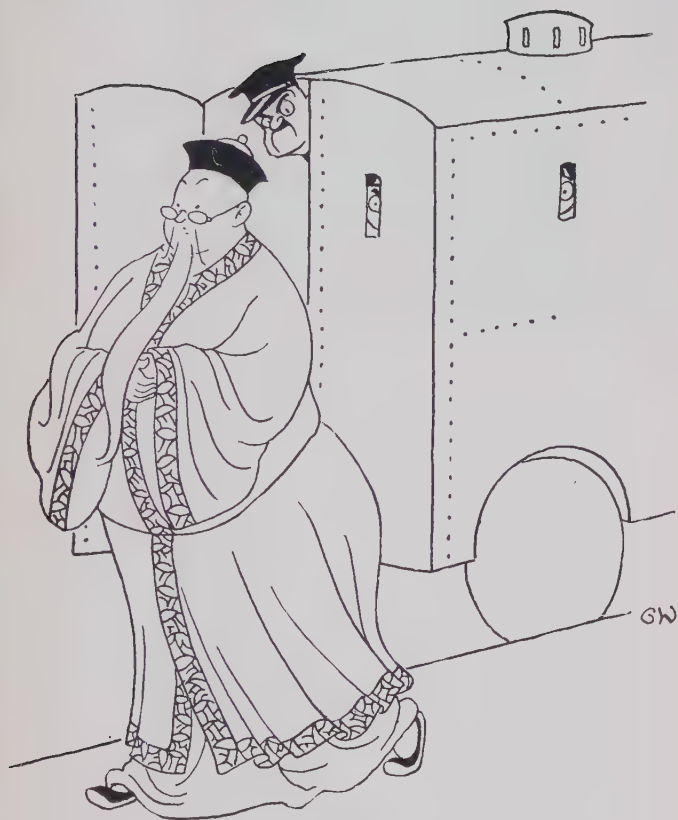
IGNOTUM PRO PERICULO

THE mounted cop on 45th Street
Sidles his fine horse
Round a little delivery tricycle
Letting him toss and caracole
Until he gets the idea
It's not really dangerous.

And I've seen also sleek proud critics
Shy and bridle and step sideways
Blowing their nostrils with suspicion
At some new vehicle of art
Of an unfamiliar shape.

HE KEEPS MOVING

I've always been curious (said the Old Mandarin)
About armored trucks,
But I've never really had a good look at one;
I don't suppose I ever will.
When I wish to pause and examine them
Some instinct of caution
Moves me on.



SUBPŒNA

Greeting! the letter began,
And I thought, how wrong to believe
That Americans are discourteous.
I read further:
It was from The People of the State of New York,
They said, *We command you*
That all business and excuses being laid aside. . . .
And I discovered that a printer
From whom I had ordered one casual volume
Now sought to prove me liable
For a whole de luxe series.



EMBARRASSMENT IN A FISCAL TROUSER

WHEN I abandoned my Eastern robes
I learned that trousers
Have their drawbacks.
For when my impoverished friend
Said, Lend me a Dollar,
I replied somberly: I've got exactly two bucks,
I'll split with you;
And I went down into my jeans.

Then I remembered:
In that pocket were two clean Ones
Folded tightly together,
But also two magnificent Tens,
For I had cashed a check
To meet urgent needs.

The two little wads felt just alike.
Which would my hand bring up?
If the Tens emerged should I feign amazement
And the sudden death of an Ancestor?
Apprehensive, I drew out the engravings—
It was the Ones
And I say to myself, like your Western gamins,
Gee, what a break.

Under the copious gowns of the East
Such little moments of fiscal uncertainty
Are graciously concealed.

SCIOLIST

THE learned behaviorist
Who had lectured for twenty years
At the Imperial University
On Analytical Gynosophy
And Predicated Stimulus and Response in
 Woman
Met a young wench at the Feast of Lanterns
Who proved him cockeyed
In thirty minutes.



ADVANTAGES OF TRAVEL

IN YOUR country, pondered the pensive Old
Mandarin,

Chow dogs are valued as social ornaments,
Bred as pets for beautiful ladies.

In China you find them
Hung up in the meat-shops
On sale as food.

Many a social favorite
Remains a favorite
By staying a long way
Away from home.

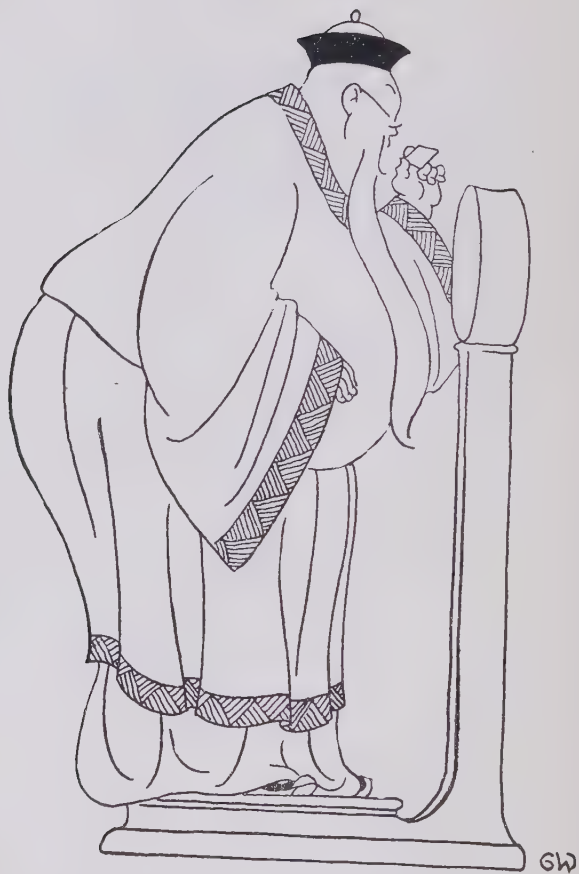
SAM SINGER

THE taxi-driver was singing in his cab
("California, Here I Come").
Feeling good, Sam?
Rotten. I was singing because I'm hungry,
I ain't had my supper yet.

I used to make 40 to 50 a week,
Now I got to get by on 18 or 20.
I need some warm underwear pretty bad,
It gets cold in the cab at night,
But the wife and I was figuring today.
We can spare about 5 bucks
And the baby (she's five years old)
Needs a coat.
I got an old jacket
I can put on under this one,
And listen, buddy,
Believe me I ride a lot warmer
When I know the kid's warm
And looks decent.

ICI ON PARLE . . .

TRYING to talk a foreign language
I speak in faulty accent
And get all subjunctives wrong.
What wonder if I err
In the most alien tongue of all,
The Truth.



WEIGHING MACHINE

IF CORRECT WEIGHT, THE DATE, YOUR FORTUNE—
The coin rang, and a printed ticket
Said 190, *You are very self-contained*
And though not unsociable
Happiest when alone.
Ah, too much weight, too little fortune,
But how did the machine
Know I was coming?

JACK BE NIMBLE

NEAR and nearer, this season of outgo
(Cried the deflated Old Mandarin)
Comes my 5000th check
On the Prune Exchange Bank.
O times of flush and times insolvent,
How many joys and necessities,
How many grunts and gripings
Are recorded in this manuscript serial.
These are my memorial,
O complicated civilization,
These 5000 transfers
Of arduous kale.
Surely some ritual of achievement
Should solemnize
The 5000th check.

INCOGNITA

ALL afternoon I was plagued
By a strong sweet perfume,
An aroma of amour, unaccountable,
That seemed to be part of me,
On my fingers and in my clothes.
I, the old anchorite, wondered much,
And found myself thinking impossible thoughts.
At last I diagnosed this influenza of musk:
It exhaled from a casual folder of matches
Which I had picked up in a tea-shop.
It was inscribed *Harvard Club of New York,*
Ve-Ri-Tas.

O unknown Lucifer of Harvard,
Who is the lady who smells so sweet
That you keep her supplied with your matches?

OLD STROM

I REMEMBERED then
Felix Riesenbergs story of Old Strom,
Grizzled quartermaster on the liner *St. Louis*.
(Have you forgotten the smart *St. Louis*
With her trim lines and two slender funnels?)
Old Strom made one voyage as a deck steward;
Then he begged to return to the wheel.
"I'd rather not be tucking ladies into them
 chairs;
I don't like the smell of them ladies;
They all smell different:
It's unnatural."

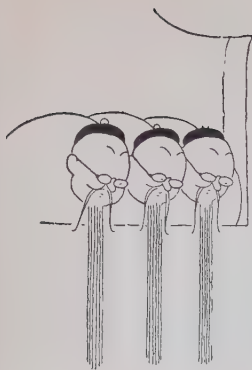
BOOKS IN THE DARK

SUDDENLY I thought of all my books
Locked up in a house in the country.
Darkness and cold creep in
Between the bravest pages.
Do you miss the lamplight, William Hazlitt?
Do you remember me at all, John Donne?

A MANCHU THURSDAY

THREE bearded encyclopædists
Looking forth from the Imperial Library
Saw a buxom serving-wench
Trudging off, in her flowered shift,
For her Thursday Out.

One strangled himself with a rope of parchment
manuscripts,
One re-edited the Confucian Analects,
One waved to her from the window
And wished her good luck.
Which of these three, inquires the puzzled com-
mentator,
Was the real sage?



TEDIUM AT TEA

POLITENESS has its drawbacks:
You remember the old problem
Of the Seven Courteous Mandarins?

Seven Ceremonious Mandarins
Met to take tea together
In a charming pagoda.
The question of precedence arose,
None of these old-fashioned gentles
Desiring to occupy
The more honorable seats.
The keeper of the tea-house,
A low scheming fellow,
Suggested to these simple old sticklers
That they take tea together daily
Until all had been seated
In every possible arrangement.

The guileless Mandarins
Enchanted at such sociable solution
Of their honorable difficulty
Were glad to agree.
They learned too late
They had tediously condemned themselves
To assemble daily
For nearly fourteen years.

OF A POET WHO DIED YOUNG

HE WAS master of the stop-short,
Brief poems in which the words are few
But the meaning continues in readers' hearts.
His life, too, was like that.

GOTHAM GOLD STRIPE

IN EVERY Fifth Avenue bus
The left hind seat on the upper deck
Carries an advertisement
Of ladies' stockings.

That seems to me
The shrewdest psychic bid in New York
For just there, at the head of those curving steps
Everyone, both male and female,
Is most stocking conscious.

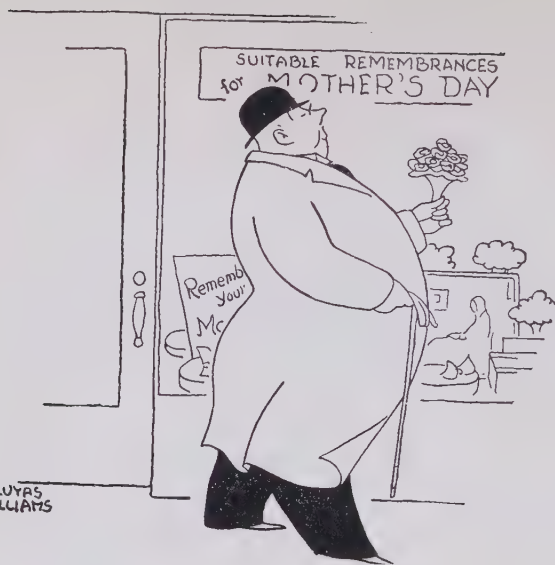
STOP-SHORT

ALL poems, in all tongues, in all ages,
Say always the same thing:

Here am I, darling,

But where art thou?

GUYAS
WILLIAMS



ANOTHER STOP-SHORT

BUT how the American barbarians
Must neglect their filial duty
That they have to appoint, by ballyhoo,
A day for honoring their Mothers.

ON THE NOSE

WHEN the Old Mandarin first came to broadcast
On our Ginger Cubes program
(Said the Account Executive)
He was unfamiliar with the sign language.
He was nervous, and as I watched him
Through the glass window of the Control Room
To allay his anxiety
I touched my finger to my nose,
Which means, the time allowance is O. K.

Always precise in his deportment
He thought I was warning him
Something was amiss:
He seized his silk handkerchief
And blew so violently
That every kilocycle reverberated
From here to Seattle.

HIS FRIEND THE COP

ONLY 3 bucks, O. M.?

How come *Golden Wedding* for 3 bucks?

The traffic cop is my buddy,

Replied the Old Mandarin.

He went with me to the speakeasy

And said, Listen, Charley,

Give the old man a pint

For the same price you charge me.

SINUS TROUBLE

I'VE got Sinus Trouble,
Said the Old Mandarin,
Admiring shapely Poo Pitty Sing.
She thought he meant
A pain in his head,
But the literal old etymologer
Was remembering the true meaning of *sinus*—
A curve.

READING ALOUD

THERE'S a game of Reading Aloud
Enjoyed by experts:
You read out passages from a novelist
With whose style the listeners are familiar
And attempt to interpolate
Mischievous improvisations of your own
But approximating the author's manner.
The sport is to see whether your audience
Can detect your insertions of fraud.

This is a game much enjoyed
By Old Nick himself
Who can read us the text of the Author
With such cunning insinuations of sophistry
That we don't know what's what.



GW

NO ADMISSION

M. VINROUGE, the homesick wine merchant from
Beaune,
Heard of a French speakeasy in New York
Which specialized in Burgundian cuisine.
He tried to get in and was refused at the door,
And the more he talked French
The more they were convinced
He was some specially subtle
Revenue Agent.

A QUESTION

BUT how, asked the Inquiring Child
When told she must accept Holy Writ in toto,
How did they get the Exact Words
To put in the Bible?

STOP, LOOK, LISTEN

MENTAL grade crossings, said the Old Mandarin,
Should be abolished.

It is intolerable

That in passing through another man's mind

There is the horrid peril

Of being run down by a thundering prejudice.

ROTATION OF CROPS

YES, said a visiting Mandarin,
There never was a family
That made such use of their literary resources.
They got hold of BLANK
(Mentioning a famous poet
About whom that family had written innumer-
able books);
They smoked him, they chewed him,
And they used the ashes for snuff.

IN THE PEOPLE'S GAS BUILDING

"YOU'RE thinner, aren't you?" said Sid Avery,
The delightful bookseller.

"Yes," he replied, "I am thinner.
I've been thinking."

"No," said Sid, fixing the old babbler with a
crystalline eye,

"No, you haven't been thinking.

You've been wondering."

And there was loud applause.

THE WELL-HEAD

OUTSIDE the antique shop on 47th Street
There's an old stone well-head
And whenever I pass it
I imagine a scene for the movies—
Charlie Chaplin hiding inside it
While indignant pursuit
Goes clamoring by.
In the well-head of these poems
I also hide myself
Where the policemen of literature
Are not likely to look.

CATHARSIS

THE smart freighter *City of Elwood*
Was unloading at Pier 58.
“What’s your cargo?” I asked the mate.
“Myrobolloms, gunnies, and tea,” he replied,
“And 3000 tons of castor oil beans,
Physic enough for the whole of America.”
And I thought to myself,
Perhaps that’s exactly what this civilization
needs:
A good purge.

Certainly our economics is costive
And our bowels of mercy
Suffer from constipation.

EIGHT HOURS

THE young poet complained
Of low dearthy spirits
And inadequate transmission into print.
Both in literature and in metaphysics
(Suggested the Old Mandarin)
The best remedy for biliousness
Is, get a little sleep.

ARTS OF GOVERNMENT

WHY, O Fountain of Wisdom,
Is this humble existence
Plagued with ironics?
The Old Mandarin was flattered to receive
An invitation to dine with the Emperor
And then, in the same mail, found a bill
For the Imperial Income Tax.

THE LAUGH

ONCE, in the season of fiscal nadir,
Two necessitous Mandarins,
After gazing in the window of the famous jeweler
To see how many jade necklaces
Were, that week, reduced
From twelve thousand to six,
Passed on, one of them remarking,
“Now our duty is accomplished.”
The other, cleft by some twinge of comedy,
Laughed loud and shrill.

Fifth Avenue, long unaccustomed to laughter,
Turned apprehensively to stare
Wondering whether Congress had again denied
Beer
Or grass had been found growing
In the streets of Detroit.

LITERARY NOTE

MU KOW, the poet, printed some verses
About the telephone booth at Putnam's
Suggesting mildly that visitors who come in
Merely to use the phone
May also some day purchase a book.
The bookstore was pleased
And posted the poem in the booth.
The first time they put it up, it was stolen.
The second time, someone wrote on it
Your American monosyllable of sans-gêne:
Nerts.

CONGRATULATION

DELIGHTFUL phrase
Was that of the colored janitor
Who received a tip for some service.
“Did you get that Dollar I left for you?” said
the tenant.
“Yassuh,” smiled Fuscus,
“That’s just what I wanted
To congratulate you about.”

CONSIDERATE

Good old Chaucer,
Always genial and accommodating,
Even planned his birth and death
To make things easy for his students.
No wonder we love him.
His dates are so easy to remember—
1340-1400.



THE UMLAUT

GAZING sadly at the Swedish delicatessen
The adipose and esurient Old Mandarin
Saw lingon jam (a kind of cranberry),
Teewurst of pure pork,
Swedish brown beans,
Anchovies, matjes herring,
Praliner, Spisbröd, Fiskeboller,
And Knackebröd
(From the Knackebrödsbageri in Göteborg).

O Greta Garbo,
Was it on such pinguid victual
You preserved that heavenly figure?
Is it the umlaut that keeps one slender?

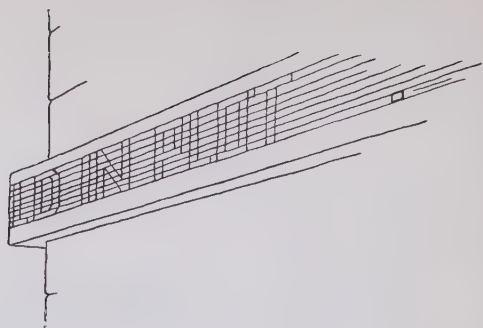
THOUGHTS IN THE PARK

THE Aberdeen terrier sneered at the mongrel
For his haphazard lineage,
But a few days later, Scottie was seen
Being taken to the vet.
Thoroughbreds ride in more elevators,
Mused the mutt,
But also they have more worms.

PERCENTAGE OF SLIP

THE Chief Engineer of the steamship
Showed me his daily report:—
Revolutions of engines, 126,000
Engine run today, 418 miles
Actual run, 394 miles
Percentage of slip, 6.4

Oh if I could propel my own affairs
With so small a Percentage of Slip.



STERN CHASE

SOMETIMES, watching the electric news bulletin
In Times Square,
I forget to read the fiery message
Fascinated to watch the little flickering period
Swimming along at the tail of the sentence
Like a baby goldfish
Trying to catch up.
I have a horrid thought, that's Me.

WISDOM OF THE LENS

BUT the profoundest classification of humanity
Was that of the eminent Portrait Photographer
Whose filing cases unconsciously revealed
The order of importances
From the camera's point of view:—

Brides

Children

Young Women

Women

Men.

CHEVY CHASE

TERRIFIED, but exultant,
I hardened myself to drive the little Chevrolet
Through the New York Traffic.
But still I wondered
Why are the trucks that rumble just ahead of me
Always the hugest in town?

“WOMEN ON PERCENTAGE”

Variety, that frolicsome paper,
Once figured out a decimal system
For reckoning the Coefficient of Appeal
Of the ladies of the stage.
“Women on Percentage,” they called it,
And graded vaudeville prima donnas
In ten qualities of showmanship.
These were the divisions:—
Modishness, Neatness, Make-Up,
Coiffure, Lighting, Personality,
Delivery, Routine, Originality,
And *Applause*.

The naïve Old Mandarin introduced this calculus
As a game of Truth at a women’s club party
And became very unpopular.



UNTO THIS LAST

JOHN RUSKIN, sensitive student of æsthetics,
Would be startled by the portrait of himself,
Bearded, very red in the lips,
Blazoned on the cover of a spare-tire:
SMOKE JOHN RUSKIN, 5C CIGAR.

THE POWER-HOUSE

Out for my evening stroll
I discovered on 84th Street
A power-house, quietly humming to itself,
And though I lived near-by
I had never known it was there.

Some people are like that.

RIDING ON ROME

WHAT is all this about giving up Latin?
Your civilization rides on Rome
Without realizing it,
And will continue to do so,
Like the mounted police.

Yes, on every New York policeman's saddle-
leather
Is a little brass seal:
SIGILLUM CIVITATIS NOVI EBORACI.

WHEN YOU'RE WRITING

REMEMBER, when you're writing about New
York,
Faces are as important as buildings.

Dive deep into the subway, that gallery of por-
traiture;
Bathe your eyes in that flood of bitter truth.
It is not lovely, it proves no theorems,
But there is no weariness it cannot heal.

Generalizers on human trouble,
Have you courage to face those faces?
You, and you, and you, seen only once,
Good-bye forever, and good luck.

UPPER WEST SIDE

WHERE I should most like to live in your city,
Said the Old Mandarin,
Is that mansion at the South corner
Of 89th and Riverside,
For there, the Guide Book tells me,
Was founded (by Mrs. Isaac Rice)
The Society for the Suppression
Of Unnecessary Noise.

(And what, by the way,
Has become of that Society?)

Then, at lunch time, I might stroll gently
To the restaurant of the Roerich Museum,
Surely the most esoteric of rendezvous,
Where, among Thibetan paintings
And magazines of New Thinking,
An Oriental mahatma
Would feel at home.

Is it the sunset breeze from New Jersey
That makes the Upper West Side so mystical?
But one dark evening
As I passed the front door

Of the Rosicrucian Fellowship
I saw a young couple exchange a secret kiss
In the vestibule,
And said to myself
Even the occultists are human.

And at Riverside and 99th
I found the symbolic American home:
An apartment where the corner window
Is occupied by your sacred idol
(Shaped like a tiny church)
Faced inward to its devotees
With its naked little tubes and kilocycles
Exposed to the passer-by.

MISUNDERSTOOD

IN THE Coffee Shoppe near 72nd Street
Was a card: DISHWASHER WANTED.
But as the inquisitive Old Mandarin
Peered in the window
In solemn observation
Of a frizzling hamburger,
The young woman came hastily
And removed the sign.

USED CAR

I'VE sold the old sedan, Diana of the Crossways
(We haven't any use for her in the city),
But how much more I sold
Than just a 1928 Boilroaster.
The Used Car Exchange was pretty contemptu-
ous
And said they'd have to spend a lot of money
To make her look
Like a New York City car.

But I remember once, seeing her outside my
window,
Suddenly realizing what space and power were
latent
In a few feet of metal, rubber and glass:
Miracles of possibility, miracles of life and death.
How close she may have skimmed
The dark angel with a ticket.

How much more I sold. . . . There went with her
Several thousand miles of sun and snowstorm
Never to be retraced.
The Motor Parkway in sherry and scarlet,
The wayside jugs of cider, the blazing lamps at
dusk;

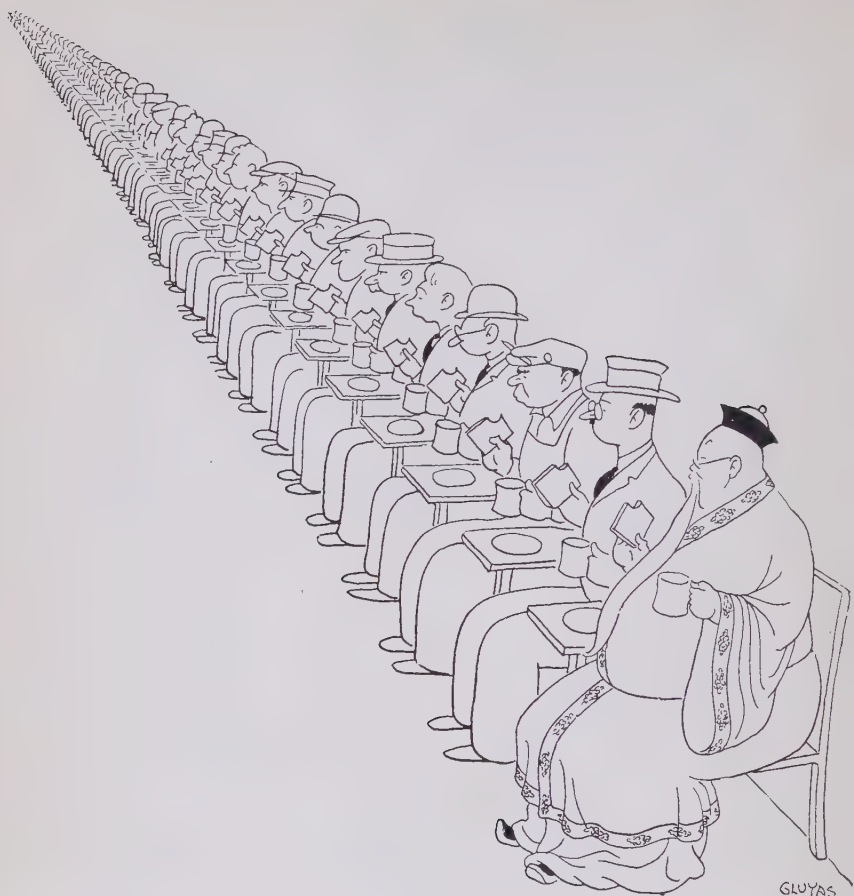
Hot noons under the Cathedral tree,
Thunderstorms at Lloyd's Neck,
Children undressing in the car;
The high shoulder of a hill in Vermont,
Berkshire inns gracious to tousled travelers,
Salt Northeast rain between New London and
Stonington,
And terror crossing the 59th Street bridge in
streams of traffic
Where man's greatest panorama teases the edge
of the eye
But the driver dare not look aside.

Regarde mon image et pars rassuré
Said the little blue emblem on the dash
(Remember to cancel that insurance!)
Which I carefully unscrewed.

We filled in the Bill of Sale:
For one and other dollars was the dealer's odd
phrase,
For, says he, suppose I sell her to someone over
in Jersey,
It's better if he don't know what I paid for her.

Whoever the chance customer may be
He'll never know how much more he buys
Than was listed in the Bill of Sale,
And somehow I hope it won't be Someone Over
in Jersey:
I have a feeling she'd like to go back to Long
Island.
She was in the garage, a mechanic looking her
over,

And as I went down the street
I heard a blast of her mellow horn.
One of those queer things that happen,
As though she was saying——



GUYAS
WILLIAMS

CHAIN LUNCH

I LIKE taking my lunch at Bickford's,
Said the sage, unwrapping a salmon sandwich
(With a slice of lemon neatly imbedded in the
crack

Like a twinge of Chinese venom
In the heart of a canticle).

It pleases me to think, as I sit here,
That also in Boston, Baltimore, and San Fran-
cisco

Some unknown Bickford brother
Likewise recruits his courage
On a platter of corned beef hash.

THE OVERCOAT.

You Americans, said the Old Mandarin,
Are great admirers of Personality;
Therefore let me tell you a story
Of the Austrian poet, Rainer Maria Rilke.

Rilke, visiting a friend in Vienna,
Left his old overcoat behind.
Years later there was another visitor at the
same house,
A shy, gloomy philomath,
Who was dubious of women, regarding them
As flies in the ointment of Thought.
He was writing a Downfall of Civilization,
And his only pastime
Was to wander in a dense melancholy
About the lively streets of Wien.

There came a spell of cold wet weather
And his host lent him Rilke's old overcoat
To wear for his afternoon stroll.
When he returned, the guest's demeanor was
odd:
Several times he began to speak, and checked
himself.
The next day he did not come back until after
dinner,

And the following time, not until midnight,
Accompanied by a whiff of wine
And several cheery young women
Whom he introduced vaguely to his hostess
As companions of hazard.
Agitated, he explained privately to his host
That every woman he met had been giving him
the eye.

One accosted him on the street,
Another sat down beside him at a pavement café
And asked what he'd have.
One beckoned to him from a passing taxi,
Some even followed him from the counters of
department stores,
Prettily tucking themselves inside his elbows
And nestling on his lapels.
Their bright eyes, their inquiring minds,
Their appetitive curvatures,
Surrounded him with exquisite chatter,
Abolished the impartial tenor of his mind,
And kept him out very late on park benches.

Aber du, said his friends in amazement,
You, who announced that women
Are only subordinate clauses,
Dangling participles in the human syntax?

I can't imagine what they see in me, he said
dolefully.
They whisper the most extravagant things;

One said, as soon as she saw my back far down
the street
She knew I was what she had been looking for
so long.

But the sad thing is,
It's only outdoors that I seem to interest them
As soon as we go inside
They appear vaguely disappointed and fade
away.

His puzzled friends
Who knew there was no future in this sort of
thing
(Either for the philosopher or the young women)
Suddenly said, Ach, don't we remember
That was the coat poor Rilke wore
That time he was writing those sonnets?
Evidently there was some mystic power
Exerted by the garment,
So to save their friend from attentions
That were endangering his austerity
They put the coat in camphor
And, as it was the beginning of winter,
Hurried the philosopher
To a milder climate.

I fear there is no moral
Except that, as your prophet Walt Whitman
loved to reiterate,
Life effuses all sorts of eidolons.
But I think if this story were known
There'd be more sale for Rilke's books.

WAIT FOR THE LIGHTS

ON West End Avenue one-way traffic
Shoots hasty merchants uptown at dusk.
See the Old Mandarin kilt up his robes
And pause in doubtfulness.
What are you thinking, O. M.?

Among the speeding cars
He quotes the Ancient Mariner:
They passed me by
Like the whizz of my crossbow.

CATHEDRAL

It's refreshing, in a land of overmuch speed,
To see things moving slowly and with patience.
I stand in the great nave of your unfinished
cathedral

(Beautiful indeed, with late afternoon brightness
Through the open western end),
And I think to myself, there need be no hurry.
God will still be there.

I have seen too many long-finished cathedrals:
There is more thrill in watching one in progress.
I like the scaffolding and wooden fences,
The lumber and guy-wires and blocks of stone.
In the yard is an incomplete statue,
A lady with scroll and key, and an owl on her
shoulder.

Wisdom, perhaps. Wisdom is never complete.

An Italian stone-cutter was asked,
How many more years to finish? Three years?
Tree year? he cried. Ten year! Maybe hundred!
We have to stop. No money.

Yet perhaps that tall nave, a ship of vision,
New York's paradox, New York's anomaly,
Reaches as high already
As the Empire State.

THE MONKEY

THE monkey in the pet-shop
Earnestly explores the bottom of his cage
Which is deep in clippings
Of Sunday newspapers.

He arches his orbits gravely:
All his reading matter says
NOW, *only* \$4.39.

SEED ON THE WIND

ON A day of keen October
The city was filled with floating seeds,
Tiny fluffs of milkweed or cat-tail
Blown from Hackensack meadows
Where autumn is something more
Than a forest of stone perpendiculars.
And all day long
On busy street crossings
Men reached to grasp the drifting gauzes
With twinges they couldn't explain.

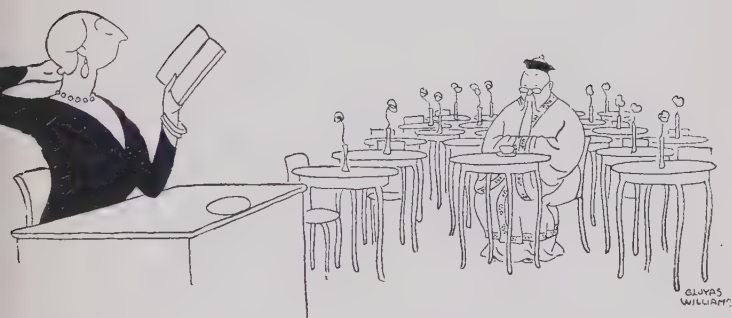
MISTAKE

I WOKE drowsily in the night
And heard a rush of cars.
Country ears, quicker than reason,
Thought: what a wind has risen
Among my tall strong trees.

DEPRESSIONS GOOD FOR MANNERS

THE Depression, as you hopefully call it,
Has been good for you.
Your taxicabs, loitering in hopes of a fare,
Almost seem to tip their hats
As they open their doors to coax us in,
And the other evening
I overheard a theatre box-office
Politely answering the telephone:
Playcherce? Why certainly, Playcherce.

Even Literature has benefitted:
Remark the swell teashops of Central Park South
Where the cashier, in default of trade,
Sits at her desk reading a book
Which has nothing to do with the caisse.



GOTHAM ADJUSTABLES

MY LITTLE poems, said the Old Mandarin,
Are like those modern stockings you say you
wear:

They do not twist or wrinkle on the mind,
They fit every length of thought.

MANHATTAN

THESE many years, said the commuter, hibernating in town,
She was a mistress I never truly embraced:
I only kissed her hand and said good-bye at dusk.
Now we lie together.
She holds me deep in her strong bosom.
All night long I hear her breathe and murmur.
Sometimes she talks in my sleep.

A DUTCH TREAT

I HAD a visit from a Madam Queen,
A female smuggler of Caribbean lineage
Who came with a note of confidence
From a Distinguished Editor.

Artists and men of letters, she whispered,
Require, for their creative stimulus,
Consommations du premier choix; in other
words,
The Real Stuff.
It was her desire to serve as stewardess
Between the philosopher and the incoming
steamer.

At a very modest price she left with me
A stone bottle shaped like an artillery shell-case
And loaded with a fragrant explosive.
Its label was a Dutch treat:—
Wij verklaren deze kruik
in onze Fabriek gevuld te zijn
met Hulstkamp's Oude Genever. . . .

Hulstkamp's Old Geneva!

We borrowed a corkscrew from the elevator boy
And as soon as the Boss had left
We opened it in the office.

Madam Queen's doctrine was sound,
For the very next day
I wrote this poem.

CALVES' LIVER

SUNDAY morning: I had liver and bacon for
breakfast,
And then I went for a stroll.

That bright morning in Riverside Park,
Under the conversation of strolling couples
And the shouts of children at play
Was a constant dull monotone of grief,
A puzzled complaint, steady in the ear
As the drone of a questing mosquito.
I wondered, and came nearer.

Below the scarp was a train of cattle cars,
Calves crying as they waited on the siding,
Shunted to and fro with running jar and crash.
Their soft muzzles were pushed through the
lattice.

If you could reckon up that total
Of brute sensation and misery,
The quality of that questioning protest,
The wastage of innocent happiness,
It would seem like a hole torn in the fabric of the
world.

Even the golden air of the autumn morning was
troubled;
There was loss and leakage enough,
Pure vitality enough gone out of life
To have written one of William Blake's poems.

Like those heifers in their double-decked cars
A few poets are shunted to and fro
In the steel trains of civilization.

I haven't eaten calves' liver since.



SIXTH AVENUE L

THE Sixth Avenue L

Is another laboratory for the collector of surprises.

At Cortlandt Street see Kerr & Johanson,
Tailors,

Sitting cross-legged on their high counters

Just as tailors have done

Since the Arabian Nights.

As I come uptown I see the Hudson River Sail-
making Co.,

The Midland Marine Bank (surely a paradox:

Can things that are midland be also marine?)

And "Artistic Printing: U. S. Revenue and
Prohibition Books."

At Bleecker Street I pass through the olive oil
region

And at the curve below 8th Street

Am startled at the admonition to Jews and
Gentiles

Carved on a church.

Near 14th I find Squirrel Bellies and Paws,

At 28th, Candies and Sugar Plums,

At 32nd, All You Can Eat, 60c,

And at 39th, Gainly Hats.

But most exciting of all is a notice
About something Fyr-Pruf.
What was it that started your idea
(I daresay it's quite sound)
That things sell better
If you spell them wrong?

IT WAS BOUND TO COME

IN FACT you always needed
A little more despair.

And who is so happy as the pessimist
Who has expressed in all the perfections of prose
His sense of futility.

LOST, LOST

THE last Saturday night in September
Said an American authority
We return to Standard Time
And regain the hour we lost last April,
Thus evening up.

Dear boy, how fallacious is the equation.
Since when was an hour of September sleeping
Worth sixty minutes of April midnight?
Autumn gives noble and brilliant pangs,
But never an equivalent
Of what we lost in spring.

Autumn is an essayist,
But Spring was a poet.

MANNERS

“WHAT, haven’t you read Voltaire’s *Dictionary*?
I’ll bring my copy round for you.”

Not at all, replied the Old Mandarin.
I hope I have better manners than that.
I’ll come to your apartment
And pay my respects to it there.
Voltaire does not call on us,
We call on him.

THE FIRE ESCAPE

IT WAS built as a fire escape
But meanwhile the tenants find it more useful
As a metal connection for all the radios
To pick up the wave-lengths dashing high
On the stern and hidebound coast
Of our apartment house.
Queer to think that down those rusty stairs
Have come Gandhi on tiptoe
And Bernard Shaw in his heavy brogues
(O Dublin Assurance).

PRIVATE TUTORING

IN A time of financial slack
The Old Mandarin had to support himself
By private tutoring.

Tell me, O Master, about American Literature,
Asked Quince-Face, his favorite pupil.
Hearken well, Big-Eyes, he replied:
The Library at Yale is so large
That the watchman walks nine miles
Making his rounds every night.
It files 2,000 newspapers and periodicals
And the telephone booths
Are built like Gothic confessionals.
Poor Big-Eyes was obscurely disturbed,
But No, he consoled her,
It is a just example of American symbolism,
For in that country some of the sincerest peni-
tences
Are made over the telephone.

RED FLAGS

BOSWELL, a drunken Scottish lawyer,
Wrote the more private passages of his journals
In Greek script.
His descendants took care to ink these out in
the MSS
Which so aroused the curiosity of subsequent
editors
That they persevered cunningly
Until all was deciphered.

Naturally, when people see red flags waved in
the street,
They stick around
To be as close as possible to the explosion.



THE BEAN POT

WHEN we had a Chinese cook
He used to prepare wonderful messes of rice
With a pungent dark-brown sauce,
A sauce made of soy beans.

One day, after he had left,
I found, tossed away in the trash-barrel
(Where I find so many wonderful things)
That fat little earthenware pot,
Glazed brown, with short neck and stubby spout,
In which the soy sauce had come from China.

My blessèd sauce-jug! Just the thing
To hold two daffodils, or a bunch of pipe-
cleaners—
Always comb the trash-barrel, O philosophers,
Other people's trash
Is often your treasure.

A MOTTO

EXCELLENT fellow was that friend of mine
Who, needing a motto for his sun-dial,
Inscribed it
It is later than you think.

AN ADVENTURE

No MAN can smell the fragrance
Of his own tobacco.

The stranger by me in the smoker
Had been sitting uncomfortably close
And I couldn't guess why.
I had been gazing steadfastly out of the window
Fearing he would start a conversation,
Yet how pleased I was
When he said, "Excuse me, buddy,
But what's that stuff you're smoking?
Gee, it smells great."

JAPANESE HOSTESS

I MUST have quiet in my spirit
When I'm arranging my flowers.
If I am uneasy or troubled
While planning the ceremonial decoration
My flowers look anxious too.

A WHIFF OF OPIUM

THIS is the Season of Unanswered Letters
When drowsy Mandarins
Commission moonlights of July
Or heavy August middays
To answer all inquiries.
This is the season of Renewed Subscriptions:
Resubscribe to Laissez Faire
And leave the rest to hazard.

THOUGHTS IN A BATH-HOUSE

My American friends
Tell me how much they love sea-bathing
And yet, every time emerging from the sport
They drench themselves in a fresh-water shower,
Washing off all that tingle of salt
Which was the virtue of the plunge.

So, O philosophers, your jocund students
Dive merrily in your bracing brine
But are always careful,
Before returning to daily life,
To wash away every trace
Of your salty ocean sting.

AN ADVANTAGE

THE best Chinese novels
(Remarked the Old Mandarin)
Have usually been anonymous; which is wise,
For fiction of any potency
Inflicts upon its perpetrator
Distressing requests for autographs.

MAXIM FOR COLLECTORS

THE autograph most worth having
Is one that was never intended as such.

RECANTATION

FORGIVE me, Gooseberry Blossom
(Wrote the Mongolian lyrist),
For those much too confident words this after-
noon.
Tonight, I said, I shall love my work above all:
And as I sit with my lonely manuscript
I see thy level eyebrows
In every small dark line—
Such little little things to interfere
In the History of Manchu Poetry.

QUERY

IF EVERY other poet
Means as much more than he says in his verses
As I do in mine
How shall I read poetry intelligently?



A TONIC

FAITHFUL student of all arts of ink
The Old Mandarin would never do without
His weekly copy of *Variety*
In which the jovial moom-pitcher advertising
Rebuilds his morale, and is beef, iron and wine
To a sluggish humor.
Who, he says to me gravely,
Could feel depressed after reading
So lively a bravura as this:—

MONSTER RADIO AIR JAMBOREE
TO MAKE WORLD CUCKOO-MINDED

Radio Titan Will Own the Air
The Night of April 8th
48 N. B. C. Stations in Spectacular Stunt
To Sell the World—Hook, Line and Sinker—
Titan Gods of Mirth
Hurling Mighty Bolts of Laughter
Turn Chuckles Into Bull Roars
And Titters Into Belly Laughs.

TO AN INDOLENT PUPIL

JOSEPH CONRAD, one of the greatest of their
romancers,
Has said that only three days after finishing
The Nigger of the Narcissus
He began "on a sudden impulse"
Another tale.
Yet, after those noble last pages of the *Nigger*
He might well have earned some ease.
Mark you, son of the Manchus,
In the dynasty of Emperors
There is no 'rest.

THE BULLET HOLES

ON Fulton Street I saw a limousine
With five bullet-holes in the windshield.
A policeman and a throng of citizens
Were looking at it
And the bystanders were chiefly interested to
 argue
Whether the bullets
Were fired from without or within.
Dear boy, I admit
This civilization of yours
Sometimes frightens me.

TOM COLLINS

IN THE first warm April dusk of spring
We sat, a tall pale drink in degustation.
The always rational old Oriental
Inquired, Why is the medicament so-called?
Who was Tom Collins?
In your varied literature of sentiment
There was, I now recall, a certain Collins,
Who wrote an *Ode to Evening*
Where bat and beetle, like the New York taxis,
Utter a "short shrill shriek,"
A "small but sullen horn."
Is it he this gin commemorates?

The hideaway agreed, it was not he.

Another Collins also, William Wilkie,
Writer of supreme detective stories:
I knew a man and wife, in a summer cottage,
Who used a set of Wilkie Collins' works
As proxies to leg up a broken bedstead,
But learned by chance the magic of *The Moon-*
stone,
Began to read, and totally absorbed
Abandoned bedding and couched on the floor.
This draught is much the color of a moonstone—
Glory to that Collins! Was it he?

The convives scratched their heads, but thought,
not he.

Even in the old Bartenders' Manual
We could not learn, to tell our Chinese guest,
The identity of Blessèd Thomas Collins—
But found at least this sentence (worth pre-
serving)

Of good bartending prose:—

*“This drink must be drank as soon as mixed
In order not to let it get too stale
And lose its flavor.”*

Which counsel we observed. Skoal, Thomas
Collins!



ETIQUETTE

SEEING some undershirts marked 55c
In a window on Sixth Avenue
The Old Mandarin bought a couple
But discovering later
That they were labelled *Gallant Underwear*
He returned them, saying
These were evidently intended
For a younger man.

LETTER TO A MYSTIC

WE ALL have our darknesses.
Let us not too often enter them
Simultaneously.

THOUGHTS FOR ST. STEPHEN

INSTEAD of the Puritans landing on Plymouth
Rock
(Said Jo Davidson, the delightful sculptor)
How much pleasanter this country would have
been
If Plymouth Rock
Had landed on the Puritans.

CAVE VERBOS

IN A great appalling book
Which I am not yet strong enough
To read without flinching
(Few inhale ammonia on purpose)
A bitter uproarious passage
Tells how young Gargantua
Disobeyed all the catchwords.
He sat between two stools,
Struck before the iron was hot,
Put the plough before the oxen,
Scratched where it didn't itch,
Leaped before he looked,
Reckoned without his host,
Looked gift horses in the mouth,
Threw the helm after the hatchet,
Locked the stable door after the steed was
 stolen,
Thought everything that glittered was gold,
Ate his cake and had it.
I suppose the merciless ironist
Was warning us against the peril
Of using words too easily.

Look out for parsons and doctors when they
 write books—
And Rabelais was both.

FEMINAE NIHIL

“MORE anonymity I crave,”
Ejaculated Hygeia Sippers,
The poet of Croton-on-Hudson,
But continued just the same
To send her stuff to editors.

NASAL ATTRITION

P'UR FISH, the Manchu scholiast,
Having attained a momentary prosperous tran-
quillity
What did he do with it?
He went out hunting more grindstones
To rub his nose against.

MEMORABILIUM

THIS was the coda
That No Sho, the Chinese essayist,
Set down for his ambitions in writing:—
Not to be too solemn
But not too jocose neither;
Never let the reader behind the scenes of com-
position,
And when in doubt
Go and have some scrambled eggs, Camembert
cheese,
Cold spaghetti, gooseberry jam
And anything else you can find in the ice-box.
Remember also
That the reader is just as anxious as you are
That it should be good stuff.



GRINDING TEETH

NOTHING in the life of Lord Byron
Pleases me so much as the fact that his dentist
Said he was damaging his teeth
By grinding them in his sleep,
And I think how many Literary Critics
Are probably doing the same thing
This very night.

ASSESSMENT

A FIRM intention to write something worth while
Is not enough,
Not nearly enough;
But there is no harm
In having such an intention.
The question is, whose while?
And how much is your while worth?

FLASHLIGHT PICTURE

YES, said Dove Dulcet, the sub-caliber poet,
I knew a writer
Who began to be decadent
Before he was even mature.
In fact, he added somberly,
I knew him very well indeed.

AHEAD OF THE PROCESSION

AND meanwhile
My mind has run on and finished this
Long before my pen.
My mind is already in bed
Reading a detective story.

SYNOPSIS

WE ARE all well-trained in forgetting,
Yes, we are experts. And there's a reason:
The mere act of memory,
Even while we wipe wet laughter from our eyes,
Admits what we prefer to ignore.
Only the tender folly of humane beings
Would trifle with memory.
Gods do not remember:
Dissect any deity you please,
His veins circulate nothing but golden Now.

THE TIDE

HIGHER and higher, brooded the Privy Coun-
sellor,
I see the tide of papers and phone-calls rising,
Letters, appeals, requests, reproaches, . . .
Does anyone reach forty, in this lunatic life,
Without being inundated
By irrelevant details?
I could spend all my time
Just sifting and sorting the mail:
No wonder minds harden in self-defence.
“We haven’t much time,” whispered Gooseberry
Blossom,
And he went out and burned
His whole mass of Unfinished Business.

What a bright clear flame.

SALTIMBANQUE

ALL round the margin
Of any consignment of print
Is a continuous flicker of readers
Leaping to Conclusions—
Excellent conclusions for them, no doubt,
But not necessarily the author's.

ADEQUATE REASONS

THEY asked the Old Mandarin
Why he had been so long silent,
To which he replied:
Among the sages of the East
Silence requires no apology.

Pressed for further explanation
And interviewed on the subject by the Associated
Press
He gave out a Statement
Which puzzled even his Public Relations Coun-
sel:—

STATEMENT

The bankruptcy of a Boston publisher
Threw upon the counters of Liggett's Drug
Store
In the Grand Central Terminal
A number of copies of *Devotions*, by John Donne.
This book, which Mr. Liggett was selling
(Last December, anyhow) for 50 cents,
Combines a childlike simplicity which need not
trouble the mind
With such glut of eloquence
As will rejoice the true lover of lingo
And seem very tedious to most New Yorkers.

O John Donne, to quote yourself,
“In whose words there is such height of figures,
Such peregrinations to fetch remote and pre-
cious metaphors,
Such curtains of allegories,
Such third heavens of hyperboles” . . .
When I can write as well as John Donne
I shall be glad to reappear in print.

RIDE WITH ETHYL

THE Old Mandarin
Had made a habit of praising the pensive life
Of the antique Chinese philomaths,
But suddenly, one lucent winter day,
Hurrying in his yellow robes across 42nd Street,
He paused to realize how indispensable
New York had grown to him.
Her ecstatic ether, her wild vitality,
Her lunatic and harlequin emprise
Had grafted in his heart. He realized
He so much loved her miracle of frenzy
Perhaps he never could go back
To the tea house and the water lily pond,
The afternoons with Poo Pitty Sing
And the poems of Li Po. . . . And pausing thus
Almost he never did go back indeed.
He just escaped being obliterated
By a monstrous truck loaded with gasoline
And painted RIDE WITH ETHYL.



GLUYAS
WILLIAMS

A FRAGMENT FROM DONNE

“WE SAY that the world is made of sea and land,
As though they were equal;
But we know that there is more sea in the
Western
Than in the Eastern hemisphere.
We say that the firmament is full of stars,
As though it were equally full;
But we know that there are more stars under
the Northern
Than under the Southern pole.
We say the elements of man are misery and
happiness,
As though he had an equal proportion of both,
And the days of man vicissitudinary,
As though he had as many good days as ill,
And that he lived under a perpetual equinoctial,
Night and day equal, good and ill fortune
In the same measure.
But it is far from that;
He drinks misery, and he tastes happiness;
He mows misery, and he gleans happiness;
He journeys in misery, he does but walk in
happiness;
And, which is worst, his misery is positive and
dogmatical,
His happiness is but disputable and proble-
matical.

All men call misery misery,
But happiness changes the name by the taste
of man."

The above, copied fair from Donne's *Devotions*,
Is the pure paroxysm of rhetoric.
Those who have never considered
How noble is the mystery of prose composition
Let them read it aloud,
Let them savor it in their rumen.
In such writing as that
Language resumes specie payments,
And, as Benedick said, or almost said,
A whole college of wisecrackers
Cannot flout me out of my opinion.

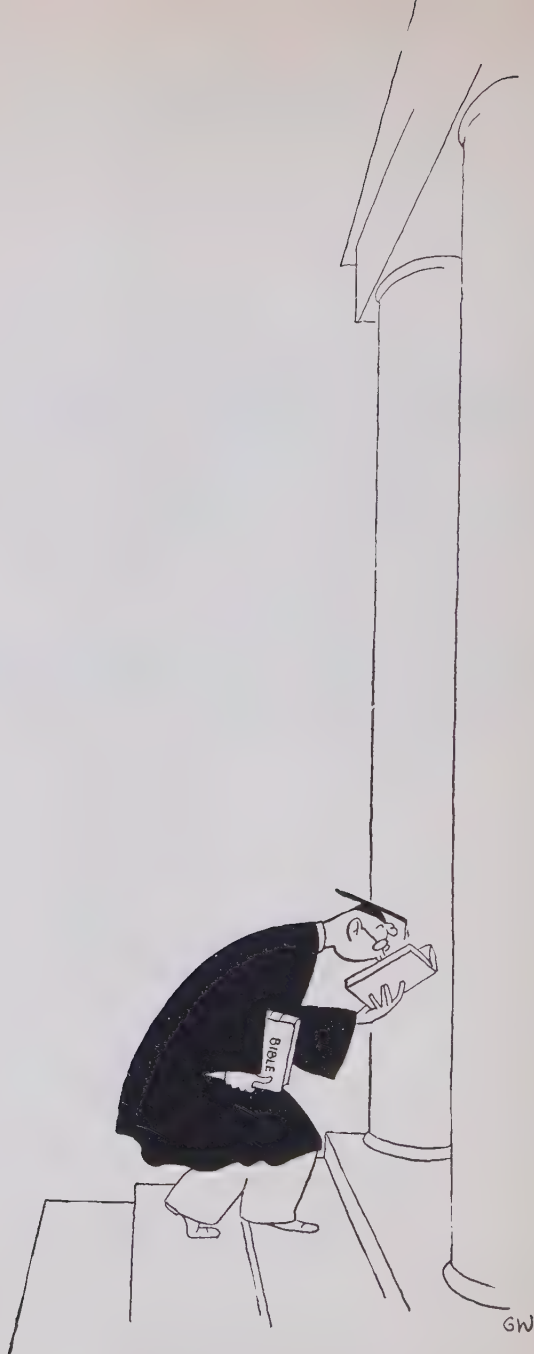
THE CANKER WORM

“THERE has developed in your vicinity”
(Writes to me the Davey Tree Expert Company)
“A bad infestation of the canker worm.”
(I wondered how old Dr. Davey
Got to know me so well?)
“These canker worms become very objectionable
As they drop down on their webs
And litter up the place in general.
They are general feeders.
That is, they will eat almost anything.”
(Somehow I had a humorous fellow-feeling
For the industrious worms.)
“I have seen them so thick
That they have defoliated privet hedges.”
But Dr. Davey’s letter
Did not have the result he imagined.
It set me to defoliating
My William Blake—

*O Rose, thou art sick!
The invisible worm
That flies in the night,
In the howling storm
Has found out thy bed
Of crimson joy . . .*

DISAPPOINTMENT

THE greatest of spiritual dangers,
Observed the Old Mandarin to his Public Relations Counsel,
Is when the private concerns of your intellect
Assume the status of News.
Don't worry, O. M., replied that hard-boiled
bird,
Nothing you'll ever pull
Is likely to be worth more
Than three sticks of minion on an inside page.
And the old Statesman was human enough
To be a trifle annoyed.



GW

RETICENCE

EVEN the Old Mandarin
Though often deficient in humor
Was somewhat amused to read in a newspaper
That in a questionnaire at an Eastern college
Krafft-Ebing's *Psychopathia* ranked next after
the Bible
As the students' favorite non-fiction.
But the precise grounds of the Old Oriental's
amusement
Not even wild reporters could drag from him.

THE RULES

THE Old Mandarin, to whom nothing human
Was more than semi-alien,
Gave some study to the arts of the dramaturge,
It being his notion to compose a revue
In the Chinese manner.
But the Pekinese Producer
Disapproved his script.
Said the Producer:
I'll give you the three positive rules
For a revue sketch:—
Hoke it up,
Give the woman the top,
Always black out on a Big Howl.

Here is an art, meditated the Old Mandarin,
That is only two-thirds co-ordinated with Life.

CAUTION

THE realm of the theatre being hazardous
The Old Mandarin was pleased
By the caution shown in the Application for
Membership

In the Actors' Equity Association:—

“I hereby solemnly affirm
That I am at present obtaining
Or endeavoring to obtain
A living from the Theatrical Profession.”

UNEARNED INCREMENT

THE Old Mandarin

Always perplexes his friend the Adjuster

At the Prune Exchange Bank

By adding his balances together

In the Chinese fashion.

For example: he once had \$5000 in the bank

And drew various checks against it.

He drew \$2000; thus leaving a balance of \$3000.

He drew \$1500; thus leaving a balance of \$1500.

He drew \$900; thus leaving a balance of \$600.

He drew \$600; thus leaving a balance of 000.

\$5000.

\$5100.

Yet, as you see, when he adds his various balances

He finds that they total \$5100

And the Old Mandarin therefore maintains

There should still be \$100 to his credit.

They had to engage the Governor of the Federal Reserve

To explain the fallacy to him.

EVASIONS

THE Old Mandarin is pure in heart
But he understands the necessities of Policy.
When the doctors examined him for life insurance
They asked him if he ever drank
Alcoholic liquors;
To which he answered "In moderation."
They urged him to be more definite.
"What do you mean," they said, "by moderate?
Do you mean just about Average?"
He had no idea what would be considered
Average
In a Prohibition country,
But knew they'd certainly be scandalized
By a Chinese philosopher's idea of Moderation.
He was wary in reply,
But when they said "Have you ever been in-
toxicated?"
He remarked nobly
"Sirs, I am a Poet."

MEMOIRS OF A MANAGER

WHEN the Old Mandarin
Was helping to manage a theatre
The first thing they taught him in showman
technique
Was always to be sure to carry
A big roll of jack.
Borrow it from the B. O. if necessary, they said,
But be sure to have it handy;
Otherwise it looks
As though business was bad.



THREE BLIND MICE

ONCE I was told of a small child
Who was taken to the Circus.
Distressed and bewildered
By noise, strange sights, and the whole violent
 confusion,
This admirable urchin burst into tears
And appealed to his Mother:—
“Mummy, sing Three Blind Mice.”
O wise true instinct!
In the huge inscrutable uproar of the universe
Who does not sometimes turn in terror
To some old simplicity
He understands.

A PHILOSOPHER

THE true definition of a philosopher
Is one who has never travelled anywhere
With more than one piece of baggage.

AN EMPTY POCKET

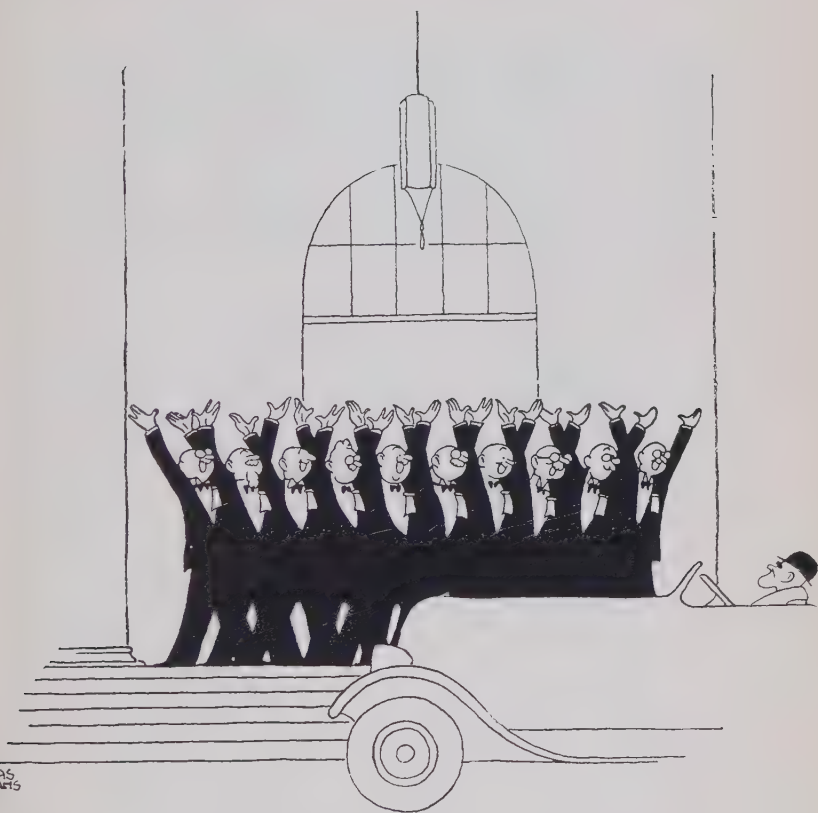
THERE'S one thing about English clothes
That's rather dangerous:
The waistcoat pockets are so wide,
When you bend over, your notebook falls out.
Grubbing for wild-flowers in the woods
My private booklet slipped unnoticed.
It was a whole day before I found it.
Poor little notebook,
Full of so many secret jottings,
Surmises, confidences, innocent enigmas,
Usually warmed by my naïve bosom
How cold it must have been
Alone all night.

PSYCHOANALYSTS

THE Old Mandarin was always pleased
When in his philosophical reading
He encountered the names of Deep Thinkers.
What an excellent name for a psychoanalyst
Is Schrenk-Notzing
For truly
They shrink from nothing.

THE GUEST OF HONOR

AT A Business Men's Convention
In a seaside city
Who was the most honored guest?
Was it the great French banker?
Was it the Traffic Man who came from Chicago
To talk about Demurrage?
Or the government officer
Who explained the Income Tax?
No: it was the merry Bootlegger
Who drove down from New York
With 20 cases of authentic Scotch
And made their meeting endurable.
In the evening festivities
You saw him blithely dancing
With the wives of his clients.
Honor to whom honor!
A square-shooter,
Always ready (if necessary) for a shake-down,
The Robin Hood of our dull civilization.



PLAYTHINGS

ALONG the Boardwalk
Cheerful shops offer me every kind of oddity
Which I couldn't possibly use—
Macaroons and lace tablecloths,
Jewels and horoscopes,
Trinkets and toys and souvenirs,
Antiques which are not old,
Novelties which are not new.

Ideas are my souvenirs and my happy play-
things:
Where is the shop
That will sell me a wholly novel idea,
A new notion of the world
To play with in secret!

FATHER HEALY

MANY an odd thing indeed
Does the undismayed Mandarin paste into his
 scrapbook
And only his oriental hardihood
Emboldened him to preserve an item
Which appeared (I have seen it)
In the London *Times*.

I reproduce it verbatim:—

“Father Healy had a wonderful racing donkey
Which he entered for some race in Ireland.
His bishop wrote to him,
Pointing out that it was undignified
For a priest
To be entering his donkey for races.
Father Healy went to the telegraph office
And wired his Lordship:
*In deference to your Lordship’s wishes,
I have scratched my ass.*”

LARGE CAKE, \$8

THE Old Sinologue, though not distrustful,
Is always wary,
And at his favorite speakeasy
Carefully examines the check before paying.
“What’s this?” he asked, laboriously deciphering
Bruno’s cursive script;
“I do not remember having partaken
Of a Large Cake?”

Be your age, O. M., replied his companion
(Poo Pitty Sing, that exquisite creature)
That’s what they always call
A bottle of wine.
Something in this episode
Amused the old gentleman’s Eastern fancy,
And thereafter, lunching at Bruno’s,
He was always careful to order
“A Large Cake.”

PRECAUTION

IT WAS then,
Daintily cracking sunflower seeds between his
teeth,
That the Elderly Statesman
Was reminded of that famous coterie of poets
The Seven Loafers of the Bamboo Grove.
Greatest of these, he told us,
Was Liu Ling
Who ordered his two serving-men
To follow him constantly.
One carried wine,
And the other a spade
So the poet might be buried
Wherever he fell.



BAGGAGE

AND when he saw how much baggage
Publishers and their wives
Take to a trade convention,
The wardrobe trunks, portmanteaux, dressing
cases, golf bags,
The gowns, dinner jackets, capes, slippers,
Lotions, peignoirs, mules, atomizers,
Orange sticks, facial implements, embroidered
nightgowns,
Foot-ease, eyebrow tweezers, magnesia tablets,
Here, exclaimed the Old Mandarin, is a bunch
That takes the Book Business seriously.

ANALOGIES IN THE PANTRY

A GOOD wine
Should stand uncorked a while before being
drunk
To exhale its ethers.
So should an author
Having inwardly fermented his work
Remain for a season gently idle and passive
Before writing it.

THE GRAPES OF WRATH

SPEAKING of wine
There is a little-known story of Marshal Foch.
When the German envoys arrived
To ask for armistice
They were given their lunch
Apart, by themselves.
And by the Marshal's express command
They were served a very rare vintage.
And you might take care, said Foch,
That they observe the label.

It was of the year 1870.

SCENE SHIFTING

SOMETIMES, in reading a tale,
You find that the scene, as you have pictured
it in your mind,
Is wrongly orientated.
You have got all the bearings wrong,
And with a sudden difficult heave of imagination
You have to black out the vision you had constructed.
You must transpose the whole setting,
Shifting landscapes, rooms, characters,
To face another way.

This process has its workings too
For theologians and sociologists.

SHIRT TAILS

ASKED for a comment on American civilization,
The Old Mandarin replied:

Your shirt-tails are not long enough.
A certain breeziness about the reins
May be all right for wenches,
But well girded and roomed about
With the kilts of his shirt-tail
The philosopher feels more secure.

SKIDDING

WHEN a car skids, the experienced driver
Steers by instinct
Toward the side to which she slithers.
Is it not so in the realm of ethics?
If you feel yourself slipping
Don't turn away from the skid
But toward it.



DICTATION

IN DICTATING letters, remarked the Old Mandarin,

You must limit your communication
To the stenographer's capacity;
And similarly

We receive intimations from God
Only by dictation through human consciousness
Which is mostly dull, timid, and stereotyped.
Steep yourselves in receptive indolence, my
little ones:

There is more in this matter
Than you suspect.

PERSONAL STATIONERY

It's not color or texture or a monogram embossed
That gives identity to a sheet of paper:
It's what you write on it.
I don't remember that any of the great letters—
John Keats's, Charles Lamb's, Abe Lincoln's—
Were written on Personal Stationery.

THOUGHTS IN RED INK

WHEN I go to the Prune Exchange Bank
To retrieve my passbook
I always think, how helpful
If there were somewhere to leave my mind
To be Written Up—
Collections entered, debits and credits noted,
Soul balanced—and Carried Forward.

LONELY FUN

PHILOLOGISTS

Have lonely fun all by themselves.
Sarcastic, for instance, means a flesh-eater
And it's wrong to apply it,
As the New York *Times* always does,
To Bernard Shaw.

SO PRIKETH HEM NATURE

BUT you do not know me
Unless you have heard me sing Chaucer to myself
Alone in the vestibule of a subway express.
Then, by God, I surprise myself
(It can only be done alone)
And I know with the artist's cunning
Where to put the pause, where the accent,
Where to bring out his sweet sly tenderness
 *[When smalé fowlés maken melodyé
 That slepen all the nyght with open yé
 So priketh hem Nature in hir coragés]*
And then, with wistful dropping cadence:—

Than

longen folk

to goon

on

pilgrimages!

Wonderful wonderful amusing world.
Raquel Meller herself would envy me
If she knew.
No one will ever know.

MINUET WITH AN INTERVIEWER

MY OPINIONS about literature?
But I have no opinions at ten A. M.
I wipe the slate clean when I go to bed
And rise every morning
To consider the world *de novo*.
To begin the day with an opinion
Is to be a traitor to the Future.

Say, that's pretty good, that's a good line,
She remarked calmly.
Don't worry, Mr. Mandarin; if you haven't any
opinions
The *Evening Lens* will give you some.

Come back about dusk, my dear,
That's when I begin to have Good Ideas.
And I heard the Old Mandarin say to his manager,
Isn't she a little pippin?
I hope she will.

COMEDIE AMERICAINE

Two young Americans, still unblemished by
thought,
Sat behind me at the Comédie Française.
“What sort of a show is this?” he said.
“A French comedy,” she replied, in her mis-
chievous little chirp,
“Something about a bourgeois gentleman.”
“Sure,” he said, “but what kind of a comedy?
I mean, is it like *The Poor Nut*?
Or is it like *The Creaking Chair*?”
Just then came the three bangs
Announcing the rise of the curtain,
And I heard him grumble,
“Gosh, isn’t that a crude way of doing things.”

FALSE ALARM

I sit here tonight
Fortified in my own particular silence.
Donny, the sheep-dog, lies in the next room,
And sometimes, when he stirs,
The tinkle of his license tag
Seems, for the dreadful tithing of a second,
The preliminary tocsin of a telephone call.

In that bursting schism of the mind
My whole wary garrison leaps furious to defense
And my walls bristle with armored paladins
Ready with reasons why I shouldn't do
Whatever it is
Whoever might want.

THE BEADS

As I dutifully hurried
In a dusk that had been cruel to me
I saw several people on 33rd Street
Hunting along the curb, bending and dodging
 among taxis
To pick up some shining scattered molecules.

There was an unhappy woman
Trying to retrieve her broken necklace
Of amber crystal beads.
Friendly passers played Hansel and Gretel,
But many were lost in the dusk.
She was not young or beautiful or wealthy,
And it troubled my heart to hear her say, poor
 dear,
"Oh, they had so much admiration today,
I felt certain that before I got home
Something would happen to them."

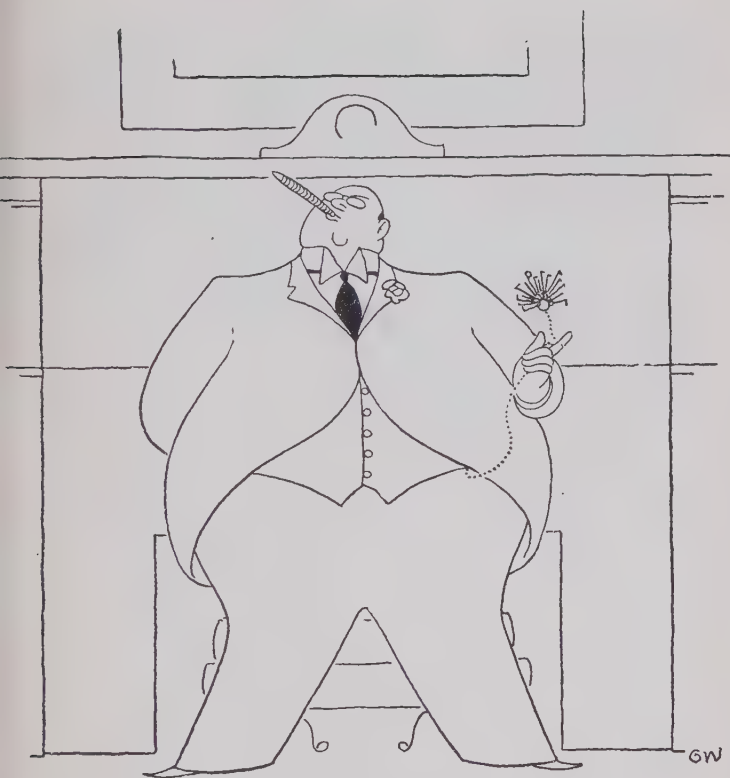
And I, too, in the traffic of my wits
Had been trying to gather the scattered crystals
Of a chain of shining thoughts.

CRITERION

IN YOUR great country
I can always tell
Whether a man is really important
By the number of keys
He carries in his pocket.

But I reckon success
By a different measure.
He who is burdened
With more than seven keys on his key-ring,
How he 'has failed in life!

To tell you what those seven keys should be
Would be another poem
And a profound one.



CAUTION

Nous prendrons des cocktails, n'est-ce pas?

Said I to the old French waiter.

But he was worried, and said it was impossible
Because we had that too synoptic table
Beside the window and the front door.

Eventually he relented (I knew he would)

And served them in large coffee cups, as usual.

But, surplus of discretion, he brought with them
A tiny jug of cream.

When we showed ourselves disposed to linger

He murmured anxiously:

Il faut boire tout de suite.

SHORT CIRCUIT

THE fraudulent electrician
Stuffs a nickel behind the fuse-plug
To prevent fuses from blowing.
It does; but it sometimes causes a fire elsewhere
in the system
That burns down the house.

And the fraudulent metaphysician,
Be he psychoanalyst or theologian,
Does exactly the same thing.

Keep your fuse-box honest
And a short circuit somewhere in the concealed
wiring
Will be less likely
To yell Rescue Hook and Ladder Number One
Out of bed some glaring midnight.

A RESTAURANT

I THOUGHT this place would interest you,
Said the Old Mandarin,
Noting her air of quick observation.
Over there, for instance, at that table in the
corner,
Is Peter Dunne
And with him, Condé Nast; you know, the pub-
lisher.
And yonder, eating corned beef hash,
Theodore Dreiser.
My *dear*, she cried,
Don't distract me with irrelevant trifles!
You see that hat,
The beige one, with divine little crumples
And the brim just a teeny bit wider—
That's the new thing, the absolute ultimatum,
What they'll all be wearing in three months.

STREGA

THERE's a liqueur called *Strega*
(Witch, sorceress, the word means in Italian)
Distilled from flowers that grow high in the Alps.

There was an argument once about its color:
One said it had the tint of listerine,
Another, No, it's more like castor oil.
I thought, but did not say, it's just the color
Of windows in great buildings seen at dusk.

Cammeriere! Bring me a glass of *strega*!
I'm going to write a poem like a cordial
Distilled from flowers that grow high in my
mind.

THOUGHTS IN A GARAGE

Now, said the motorist,
Adjusting the shutter,
I've put on her winter front
To keep her heart warm in the long long nights,
And a little alcohol
In her radiator.

DIALOGUE

WHAT have you seen today that was beautiful?

Nothing I have seen today more beautiful
Than the red neck of the traffic cop
At the corner of Barclay Street:
A proud neck, strong, honorable, ruddy
In the bitter gust of January.
And the curl, above his nape, of his thick straw-
colored hair;
And his huge gloved fingers
Clumsily wagging some driver to proceed. . . .

But, you silly little thing, that's why I love you,
Because you don't waste any small enchant-
ments.

Well, what have *you* seen beautiful today?

In that first onset of the winter squall
I saw small wreaths and sifting scrolls of snow
Dancing, twirling, floating on the path,
Running ahead like patterns on the way,
Racing down the road that led to you.

THE CODE

HERE I am in England again, said the Old
Mandarin.

It is all quite simple: I must only be watchful
Against the left-hand traffic

And remember their two great code-words—
Sorry, and *'kyou*.

I can say them with just the British inflection—
Sorry . . . so sorry!
'kyou, 'kyou!

DILEMMA

BUT my friend Madrigal
At the hotel in Dublin,
Not desiring porridge, which we others were
 having,
Sorely puzzled the waitress by ejaculating,
“Cut out the porridge for me.”

PLAUSIBLE

IN THE outer office of a London publisher
Is a preferred blonde
Whose duty it is to be handsome to callers
While they wait to be admitted to the Presence.
She also pastes up the scrapbook of "press
cuttings"
And she always says (bless her heart!),
"Oh, Mr. Mandarin,
Wouldn't you like to see the reviews of your
book?
They're so very plausible."

A BIENTÔT!

O ETABLISSEMENTS DUVAL,
When shall I see you again?
Your quite mediocre cooking
Your dusty little hedges
Your complicated ingenuity of check-slips
And your waitress who says
(when I pause a moment to meditate my syn-
tax),
Et comme vin, Monsieur?

AT THE 100,000 SHIRTS

O CENT MILLE CHEMISES! (Succursale Numéro
173)

How startled was your polished salesman:

I was buying some collars

And he asked what size I wanted.

Proudly I cried, remembering my centimetric
measure,

Pour une grosseur de quarante-trois.

NOCTURNE FOR A SETTLED BUDDHIST

ONCE I am safely couched, O Lily of Truth,
Do not visit me with profane imaginations,
For I belong to the S. G. S. S. G. B.,
The Society For Going To Sleep
As Soon As You Go To Bed.

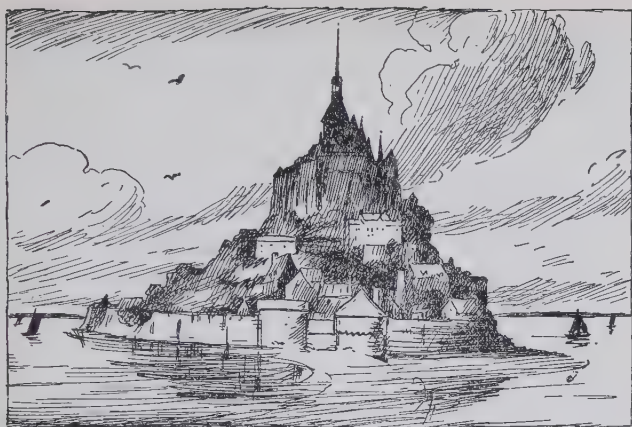


THE ROMANY STAIN

THE ROMANY STAIN

The Romany Stain was named in a double purpose. The title was picked up from a wine-card (*Tache Romanée* is a famous Burgundy vintage) but I also was thinking of a sort of Gipsy association. I wanted to suggest escape, travel, and solitudes of sun. These pieces were written, many of them in France and a few in England, in 1924, 25, 26, after escape from a daily newspaper column. It is just as difficult to write a piece every week as to write one every day; more difficult in fact, for you have leisure to think between times, and the more you think about what you want to write the more doubtful you become.

Anyhow by the *Romany Stain* I meant the lingering trace of Gipsy blood or wine of Eden that the orderly steam-laundry of civilized routine does not quite wash away, thank God. There is a linguistic problem that worries me a little, though no one has ever mentioned it. In some wine-lists it is written *Tache Romanee*, in others *Tâche*. The two words are quite different: *tache* means stain (and hence birthmark); *tâche* means task, job, work. With the circumflex, then, the phrase could mean a Roman Task, viz., a tough bit of work? In either case it was correct; and what a lovely title it is! These essays were all written in a circumflex accent, if you know what I mean. And they were exquisitely illustrated by my old friend Walter Jack Duncan.



A SEA SHELL IN NORMANDY

YOU first see Mont St. Michel from the toy railway train at St. Jean-le-Thomas. You know then that what you have always heard was true. After lunch at Genêts you drive across the sands at low tide, in a cart pulled by two horses. On a grey afternoon, with opal storm clouds coiling in the west, the wide floor of the bay lies wet and bare, shining all silver and fish-belly colours. The rock of Tombelaine sprawls like a drowsy mastiff on guard. You feel that if you stroked the warm granite chine he would rise, stretching, and fill the empty day with a yawn of thunder. In all that clean vacancy, framed in the blue scabbard of Normandy and Brittany, the holy boulder rises, a pinnacle of stone jewellery. The great ramps are rusted

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with tawny lichen. Tiny gardens niched among the steep zigzags are bright with flowers. With the genuine thrill and tingle of the pilgrim you climb, cricking your neck at the noble sheer of those walls and struts that lean upward and inward to carry the needle of the spire. Pinnacles rally and burn aloft like darts of flame. You can almost feel the whole roundness of earth poise and spin, socketed upon this stony boss of peace. You think of the Woolworth Building. How nice if that too were sown with clumps of pink and yellow blossom and had blankets of green ivy over its giraffe rump.

Your mind travels back to the tough and pious men who carried their stones here and built their little Eden of escape: an Eden so shrewdly scarped that apparently even the 15th century Old Bills of England cursed and withdrew. You imagine the pilgrims of the Middle Ages plodding the sands from Avranches—occasionally losing one or two of the party in a quicksand—and their heavenly exult as they ached at last up the steps of the “Grand Degree” and saw through the dark archway that wide hearth shouting with flame. Yet perhaps mere pilgrims were not allowed to draw near the giant fireplaces of St. Michel? That ruddy warmth that gilded the groins of the pillars, was it reserved for the abbot and the upper clergy? (You saw, I hope, those great columns in the crypt, where the veins of stone rise to their task as smoothly, as alive with lifting strength, as the cords of a horse’s haunch.)—One wonders a good deal about the mediæval pilgrim. Was he welcomed and warmed and refreshed, or was he pillaged? Probably the souvenir vendors lay alert for him, as they do

A Sea Shell in Normandy

to-day. And was there a mediæval *Veuve Poulard*, down by the barbican, with an omelet waiting hot in the pan, a bottle of wine cold in the cellar? At any rate, many a whole ox must have crackled in those vast hooded chimneys of the abbey; and the warrior abbot could throw his bones out of the window on the *goddams*, hustling to get their bombards back to Tombelaine before they were caught by the tide.

So you people this divine old miracle of stone-work, just as you have dreamed beforehand of a still living shrine with candles by the altar, and small shrill choir-boys in scarlet, the flutter of surplice and *soutane*, and dark bells calling across the sandy estuary. Then, as you are taken through in squads by a *gardien*, you realize that this noble sanctuary is dead. It is no longer a church, but a monument, under the care of the Ministry of Fine Arts. The abbey is only a shell: there is not even a chance to pray. The State, with skilful devotion, has saved and repaired the hull; but it is only a hull. There if anywhere, lifted above the quicksands (how often the old abbots must have improved this moral in their discourses), one would be eager to whisper some small silly petition in honour of man's magnificent hopes. But it is not expected. The old fonts are dry, the altars naked, the tall aisles bare as a February forest. The casket of stone filigree is empty. The imprint of the spirit is there, just as those leagues of sand are ripple-patterned by this morning's ebb. But it is only a print, a fossil. The sea has gone out. Even the tiniest parish church, with its *Tariff of Marriages* (a First-class Marriage 50 francs, a Second-class Mar-

The Romany Stain

riage 30 francs, a Third-class 20 francs) is in some sense more inwardly alive. The Mount is not even an island any more: they've built a *digue* that brings autobuses and toy trains from Pontorson. It is a shrine, a miracle, a testimonial of man's horror of the world and his fellows; but its beauty is the beauty of death, purified, serene, at rest.

You drive away across the luminous mirrors of wet beach, you see that exquisite profile shift and alter until it is a scissored peak on sky. You may walk the ebb sands of the world for ever and not find so lovely a shell. But it is only a shell, and in its whorls and passages a faintest echo of the sea.

Must it always be so, one thinks, lighting up the pipe of penitential Scaferlati? Perhaps there is always something a little dead (I don't defend this figure of speech, but I like it) about the old masterpieces? Glorious and terrible, don't they say to us that we are not to be dismayed by their beauty but to recreate our own masterpieces for ourselves? The other day I read Alfred de Musset's gorgeous little fable "Histoire d'un Merle Blanc": one of those fiery trifles in which the French genius seems at its most native: under the guise of tender and naïf simplicity such a clear ember of satire. My first thought was that de Musset's adorable little dagger in the heart should have made (if it had been heeded) so many later books unnecessary. So far as it bears on literary manners it clicks the latch to-day as neatly as it did seventy or eighty years ago, and might have spared us many editorials in the newspapers. I laid it down with the despairing happiness

A Sea Shell in Normandy

that any student feels on reaching the end of a perfect thing: for I could imagine how happy was the Infant of His Century when he finished it. He had reached one of those rare and perfect moments the artist lives for. He had done it, and knew it was good.

Yet it all had to be done again—and has been. And I remembered, Mont St. Michel reinforcing it, that these things must always be done over and over; that there is no durable pause even in the most perfect pinnacles that overlook the sea. Here and there a pilgrim will be bogged in a quicksand, or get caught by the tide. But some will reach, for a one night's reverence, the shrine where the dragon of despair grinds under Michael's heel. They chant their private prayers and penances, they get out the illuminated manuscripts, they sing their sacreds, they make their mirth. They roast an ox in the fireplace, and throw the bones through the window where the critics are haling their heavy bombards through the sand.



SLOW GIN

SANTA CLAUS came back that year even more tired and discouraged than usual. Mrs. Claus had a good fire going in the library, his fur slippers warm on the hearth, but he sat down with a grunt, too dispirited even to pull off his big boots. But Mrs. Claus, who knows very well how porcupiny the philanthropists and professional genials often are when they get home, was too wise to seem to notice his depression. She drew the curtains closer to shut out the sparkling polar darkness.

"Have you noticed how long the nights are getting?" she said. "You'll be glad to get back among your books."

Santa Claus has quite a large library, his shelves are lined with those fine rag-paper and morocco-bound *de luxe* sets of Oscar Wilde and Ridpath and Great

Slow Gin

French Courtesans, numbered (like the hairs of your head) by the Biblioshark Sodality. These are the things that Santa gets stuck with, because no one wants them for Christmas and he has to bring them home with him. Mrs. Claus, however, who doesn't know a 12mo. from an Eskimo, believes them very valuable.

But the old fellow sat staring at the fire in a serene despair, more like Santayana than Santa Claus.

"Well, did you have a good trip?" she said. "How was New York?" (Mrs. Claus is always curious to know about New York. She imagines it as a place of prodigious thrilling gaiety, and Santa has told her about the shop windows and the electric signs, which really are almost as fine as the Aurora Borealis.)

He shook his head pensively.

"The competition's getting too intense," he said. "The bootlegger is the real Santa nowadays in New York. My clients all want the little miracle of liquid flame that evens man with God. I caught a terrible cold going out in a launch to get enough whisky to satisfy my customers. A queer thing happened to me.

"Coming back in the motor boat I fell into conversation with one of the bootleggers. You'd be surprised how philosophic some of those fellows are. Well, somehow or other we got talking about moving pictures, and this chap was saying that the most beautiful thing in the world is the slowed film. He owns a movie theatre somewhere in Brooklyn, but he says he can't afford to show the kind of pictures that he likes best himself because all the crowd wants is the 'Flaming Youth' sort of thing. Well, I agreed with him about

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the slowed pictures. I said how wonderful it would be if we could for a few hours retard life itself just like that, to have a good look at the astonishing elements of loveliness that lurk in every movement. Curves, you know. See things in that leisurely perspective that God must have. Why even a taxi spinning round a corner would float like a leaf eddying on warm October air. But I guess I can't quite explain to you how I felt about it. I was tired, buzzing about getting things fixed up for Christmas.

"He looked at me rather queerly. 'It can't be done,' he said. 'God wouldn't like it. It's *His* prerogative to see things slowly. But if you can't slow down life, you can speed up the eye, which gives, relatively, the same effect.'

"I asked him what he meant.

"'Wood alcohol,' he said, 'has a queer effect on the optic nerve.' Well, I didn't like his talking like that, just after he had guaranteed the quality of the stuff I had got from him for my customers. But, to make it short, he gave me a little bottle, for myself, of what he called (I believe) Slow Gin. He said that for a brief time, and with no harmful effect (physically, anyhow) it would accelerate my eyes so that life would look like a slowed film."

He paused. Mrs. C., who knows nothing about movies, bootleggers, New York—indeed, nothing at all of life except Ridpath and the Court Memoirs—was a bit puzzled. But she could see that he wanted to talk, so she asked a question just to help him along.

"Yes," he said, "it did. I suppose you know—or

Slow Gin

maybe, happily, you don't—what a wearisome muscular exertion is involved in trying to think about abstract matters. You can feel an actual thrilling and tensile alertness in the obscure muscles of the cortex. Something the way an electric wire might feel when the light is turned on. Well, when I had taken this gin all that feeling was abolished. Thought became perfectly unaware of itself. I saw the movement of civilization slowed down to its component gestures. Wonderful, oh wonderful! I think I know now why philosophers and poets go mad. That's the way they see things. Do you remember that line of Stevenson's, '*And me-thought that beauty and terror are only one, not two*'?

"But imagine it," he went on. "I saw the passion, the momentum of New York in a grave sluggish rhythm, solemn as a great elegiac ritual. I could see significance in all the strange wonders that ordinarily flash past us in a twinkling. Expressions of loveliness and mirth and embarrassment and anger, that flit over faces and are gone, these I saw posed and held long enough to be studied and admired. I saw Time, the sculptor, in the amazing process of carving Life. I saw the reporter over the swift chattering keys of his typewriter. I could see his hand poise and float above the keyboard, softly balanced as the wing of a gull. You'd have thought he was writing the most exquisite philosophy in the world. I could imagine I saw the quick thoughts of men slowly coiling and rising like heavy smoke. I saw the crowd of commuters when the train gate opens at the Long Island Station in the evening. Instead of that multitudinous pour down the stairway, I could

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see the mass gently lip over the top step and descend as softly gradual as cold molasses. I could see the actual face and contour of clownish ecstasies and solitary despairs. I saw two people saying good-bye. Did you ever see that, as it really is?

"The bootlegger was right. It won't do. It won't do to look upon the itemized flow of life. You become aware of the rhythm of it, and it terrorizes you. Everything becomes beauty, and there's nothing more appalling than that. It heats the imagination till it splits like a roasting chestnut. Men are quite right in moving as fast as possible. You've got to go some to get away from yourself. But how lovely they are when they're unaware of themselves! I saw a girl mailing a letter, at that bronze box in the Telephone and Telegraph Building—I always have to attend to that letter box, so many people use it for mailing Christmas cards. You'd have said that she wasn't thinking of anything in particular, but no work of art ever dreamed could be more lovely than the slow stretch of her body as she hovered up on tiptoe to reach the slit. She was so perfect that I could tell she knew she was doomed. You know, that was it. I saw the solemnity that underlies every movement. I saw an audience beginning to laugh at a musical comedy joke. My sensitized eye caught the gradual coming and mounting and breaking of that poor guffaw, like a big wave crumbling in from sea. Phew, that was terrible! Never again. You know how it is in a sleigh. You've got to go fast over thin ice. Well, that's life itself. Thin ice. When you begin to monkey with the Time-

Slow Gin

sense you turn things either into a hasty farce or else into a Greek frieze."

"I hope you didn't catch a chill," said Mrs. Claus. "I'm going to mix you something hot."

She bustled up, dropped her knitting and creakingly leaned down to retrieve it. Santa watched her with humorous impatient affection. His optic nerves still retained a faint aftermath of the drug, and he was able, as she hastened anxiously toward the pantry, to slow down the image of her moving figure and see it in ponderously retarded tempo. He chuckled. But he remembered the enormous relief with which he had felt his hallucination begin to wear off. Gradually, gradually, he had seen the panorama resume its wonted swiftness, abdicate that lovely swooning dignity, resume its charming absurd hilarities and grotesqueness.

"No," he repeated to himself, "it won't do. Life has got to synchronize itself with the customary adjustment of the mind. And the mind mustn't climb out of the stream and sit on the bank to watch consciousness go by. You mustn't try to split up Time into pieces for all you find is little nasty bits of eternity. Men are determined that life should be amusing, and to be that it's *got* to move fast."

He still thought hungrily of that miracle he had seen: the grave airy dancing of creation, treading softly its dark measure to unheard, undreamed music. He saw again the slow lineament of desire, the leisurely miracle of women's grace, the insane gaiety on frolic faces, the sorry grin of cruelty, the tenderness that returns with dusk.

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Mrs. Claus came with a steaming jug.

"Well," she said cheerily, "I'm glad you had such an interesting time. And what did you decide to give them this year?"

"I wondered a good deal," he said. "I wondered whether to give them another Conrad to teach them pity, or another Anatole France to show them how to mock themselves. But what I did give them was the greatest of all gifts."

He paused and drank down a glassful of hot toddy with a shudder of content.

"I gave them the privilege, for just one day, of not thinking at all."



BAEDEKER FIBBED

I RESOLVED to renew at Cherbourg the marvels of Egypt," says the inscription on the statue of Napoleon, where the plump little emperor sits on a horse whose antic would probably have unseated him in real life. He does not specifically say which of Egypt's portents he proposed to revive; though by his gesture we gather that he means the vast stone breakwater on which shines the star of Baedeker, guiding pilgrims from afar. Myself, I was inclined to believe that a certain Swiss concierge (himself a true Bonaparte in physique) was a reincarnation of the asp. But nowadays, when we are more wonted to great engineering projects, the real astonishment of Cherbourg is the endless caravan of Americans who flit feverishly through the town without halting to draw breath. The Swiss concierge, in

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his field-marshal's uniform, harries them a little, inflicts a few cicatrices on the right-hand trouser; but most of them escape.

In the summer season the big liners come in from New York two or three a day. Every few hours you see the long strings of railway cars marked *ÉTAT* lining up along the quay to take the passengers to Paris. Our fellow countrymen come shuffling down the steep gang-plank from the tender—perhaps the tender *Nomadic*, or the *Traffic*, or the *Lotharingia*, or the *Welcome*—names so much less imaginative than the *Sir Richard Grenville* at Plymouth. After a brief frenzy in that little blue-and-white-striped shed of the *douane* where the whiskered, cloaked, and sworded *apéritif* officials look so much fiercer than they really are, they climb into the train. At once they fill the restaurant cars and order wine; or you see them sitting patiently in the first-class carriages watching the dusty quay and throwing their money to the ragged urchins who frequent the *gare maritime*. The lovely little town that lies across the basin is hidden from them by the shed. And after all, hasn't Baedeker told them that Cherbourg is "comparatively uninteresting"? So, unless the ship happens to arrive in the evening, they all buzz straight on to Paris. If they land late they go to the *Hôtel du Casino*, one of those amusing nodes in the great network of travel where sooner or later you inevitably encounter someone you know. There M. Minden, the courteous manager, will greet them with his dark, melancholy, and secretly humorous gaze; and eventually teach them that the first syllable of the town's name is not

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without significance. Sometimes, coming downstairs toward nine or ten in the evening, you'll find the quiet little lobby suddenly buzzing with a new lot. The *Berengaria* is in, or the *Olympic*, or the *President Harding*. You'll see them sitting in the bar-parlour having a snack before retiring, or looking hopefully for a new copy of the *New York Tribune*. The only French client I ever saw at the Casino was a luckless lady just in from the States who had been abroad so long she had forgotten how to order wine. She came into the bar breathing exultation at her escape from the *régime sec*. Then, as the expectant *garçon* waited for some order expressing the soul and talent of a connoisseuse, her face drooped. She couldn't think of anything . . . and ordered a grenadine—which creates in a French bartender about the same enthusiasm as asking a Liggett soda-twister for a beaker of lukewarm goat's milk.

But by the time you come down to breakfast you'll find that the overnight batch of Americans has already sped onward. Cherbourg has resigned itself to this state of affairs: so much so that if you tell them you intend to stay there awhile they'll hardly believe you, and unless you watch your baggage piece by piece they shove it on the Paris train anyhow. (*Crede experto.*) Those Americans who are still in the hotel when you enter the dining room are perhaps making themselves obnoxious to the head waiter because there aren't any hot breads. As I was sitting happily with my *café complet* I could hear one elderly gentleman crying bitterly, "Hot rolls, hot rolls. I want 'em red hot!" Why do our friends go abroad at all if they expect

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everything to be exactly as at home? It is these creatures who account for that deeply submerged glitter in the manager's eye, and make travel so much more expensive for the rest of us. At any rate, Cherbourg is not such a bad place to study one's fellow citizens, for you see them at a moment of crisis when they are very keenly conscious of their nationality. With an almost defiant air they insist on talking English to the employees as though to prove and ram home the fact that there really is such a language.

I shall never forget the thrill and charm of that late arrival. It was one of those long June twilights when the *Lancastria* dropped anchor inside Napoleon's Egyptian *digue*. On the tender, anxiously attempting to gather into one corner his various baggages, pater-familias was naturally too troubled to have a chance to enjoy the view of the harbour that lay so lilac in the evening light; though there was, subconsciously, as one's eye noticed that long solid line of stone houses which fronts the sea, the odd realization that foreign countries are real after all, which quaintly surprises one anew at every visit. By the time we had got through the customs, rescuing all our pieces (save one, containing of course the baby's most urgent affairs) from being "expedited" to Paris, it was close on eleven o'clock. The Cherbourg *douaniers* and porters work like demons at that time of night, "expediting" one to Paris, for not unnaturally they are anxious to get home and to bed. And when the boat train, with a wild scream, had left, and there was a chance for the rest of us to be chalk-marked, all hotel omnibuses had gone for

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the night. Nothing remained but a baggage *camion*, on the front seat of which, together with the chauffeur, the Swiss Napoleon, the nurse, and the four children, Titania and I rode triumphantly round the corner to the Casino. Shortly afterward, piloted by a chambermaid, we again found ourselves in open air, under stars, crossing a gravelly courtyard. Quite a surprisingly long journey it seemed. Up a winding stair, in a distant annex, we found some very clean little rooms with a jovial aroma of chlorides and windows opening above the beach. With magical rapidity a tray of hot chocolate and bread and butter was "made mount" from the kitchen, and it fell to me to administer these delights to two small damsels (aged five-and-a-half and three-and-a-half) who had been hastily thrust into one large bed. They gargled down some of the chocolate, inquired eagerly, "Is this France?" and fell into nescience. So I finished the chocolate and the crackly bread with plenty of curly whorls of pale unsalted butter. At about the same time, in the dining room downstairs, one of our fellow passengers was saying, "Some of that doughy French bread? No, thank you!"

I am always for arrivals late at night. You can't see your surroundings, and the next day you wake into a new world. From my bedroom window eight hours later I looked out upon the sunny courtyard of the hotel and an ancient in a blue apron cutting grass with a scythe.

The Casino—where we stayed two weeks—is perhaps a little symbol of the whole matter. There is one wing of the establishment which is the hotel proper, devoted

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mostly to the one-night ravishment of Americans. But then you pass through a little door into the casino itself and are in France. A terrace with blue tables fronts the harbour and the pebble beach; behind this is a dance hall where a very gay and violent little orchestra gives an *apéritif-concert* every afternoon. The tiny Citroëns and other queer boat-shaped miniature automobiles keep driving through the courtyard, and the *bons bourgeois* of Cherbourg drop in afternoons and evenings for dancing and *petits chevaux* and even (twice a week) a Paramount film shown on a very minute screen. The operator was very proud of his Paramount films, and assured me that America had produced some very great film artists, such as "Bébé Danyelss" and "Guillaume Ar." It took me an appreciable ponder before recognizing the name of the latter. At the *apéritif-concerts*, where you sit with your Raphael-citron or your café-cognac watching the dancing, you enjoy the cheerful French habit of taking the whole family along for an afternoon sip—grandmother, babies, and the dog. It would be nice to believe that the young men are all poets, for those broad-brimmed black hats and something odd about the shape of their trousers certainly suggest it. But all this gay and harmless life of the casino goes on quite apart from the hotel which the tourists see. It is always like that: there is a little door which divides the France that is exposed for the traveller from the France that goes placably about its own concerns.

But of course the real life of the town is across the revolving bridge, past the upper basin where the

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Polish square-rigged corvette *Lwow* is lying, past the docks where the English tramp steamers are taking daily the endless stream of crates of new potatoes. Across the bridge you find the taxicabs drawn up, a compact little squadron, and among them, if you are fortunate, perhaps you'll find Lucien Le Cornu, kindest of guides to the enchanting old towns near Cherbourg. His only sorrow in life is that a hundred and fifty Americans have gone touring in his car and taken photos of him but have never sent him a print. This has now been rectified. If you don't find Le Cornu at his station at the bridge-end, the thing to do is to go to the Café Continental near by where they'll give him a *coup de téléphone*. M. Le Cornu was a godsend to us; he is friendly, reasonable, a keen enthusiast for the old architectures of Normandy, and his French has a special clarity and penetration into the unaccustomed transatlantic ear. He has a delightful humour too. Our first week or so at the Casino, we, with four urchins, were somewhat the oddity of the establishment; but then arrived a very wealthy New Yorker with six children, several maids, five cases of Walker-Gordon milk, and occupied most of the ground floor of the hotel. The next morning, before he departed for the château he had rented at Dinard, I saw him musing pensively among his mountains of impediment which filled the lobby. This is where M. Le Cornu enters the anecdote, for a fleet of seven limousines was deployed in the courtyard to transport the party. Four of these were loaded with the baggage, and of this freight squadron Le Cornu was commodore. While the passenger detachment

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sped to Granville for lunch, Le Cornu halted his heavy quartet at Lessay for a brief *déjeuner*. The four thirsty chauffeurs sat down at the scrubbed wooden tables of the little Hôtel Félix; the natives crowded round to inquire the meaning of these four vehicles packed inside and out with trunks, baby carriages, golf bags, and what not. It must have looked ominously like another flight of King Louis Philippe; and indeed on that very day President Millerand was vacating the Elysée. What is it, what is it? cried the troubled Normans; for the French are always subconsciously prepared for some sort of *crise* or *coup*. Lucien took a long pull at his cider. "Well," he replied gravely, "you've heard of the American kings—the cattle kings, copper kings, petrol kings? This is *le roi des bagages*."

Excellent Lucien! I still seem to hear the clear yelp of his rubber-bulb horn as he twirls through those Norman villages, taking us to Barfleur, or Valognes loved by Barbey d'Aurevilly, to Greville where Millet was born, or past de Tocqueville's château near Cherbourg, which surely ought to be a place of pilgrimage for Americans; or to Bricquebec, whose Trappist cheese you'll do well to sample, and to the Nez de Jobourg, that fine rocky beak blown by the Atlantic wind. Well named Le Cornu: you know the canorous double note of those French motor horns, the exhale and the in.

But we were crossing the bridge and entering the town itself. Perhaps it would tempt the ladies to linger awhile in Cherbourg if I confided, on Titania's authority, that they'll find in the Rue du Bassin one of the world's best coiffeurs; and not to make it too easy

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I'll only give the translation of his name, Mr. Burning-fire. More frequented by me was the little photograph shop across the way, where I see good Mme. Vaslot's face of almost agonized intensity as she listens wildly to my French, wondering what unforgivable syntax is coming next. Then, with a sudden radiation of light she grasps my intention. I had seen, in her window, a printed placard remarking how many *situations presque inénarrables* can be preserved with a camera. "*Mais, madame,*" I tell her, "*toute la vie, c'est une situation presque inénarrable.*" She applauds. This leads us on to discuss a small dog that is in the shop, who has had his tail cut off flush with his rump. He is trying, in spite of this—can we say handicap?—to express his pleasure in the good society where he finds himself. I attempt to carry on my argument. "*Voici, madame, encore une autre situation presque inénarrable. C'est bien cruel de couper comme ça, le petit chien se trouve embarrassé parce que la queue c'est l'organe des émotions chez les chiens, son organe de sensibilité.*" With a rush of syllables she and M. Vaslot approve this doctrine, and hasten to explain that it is not their animal but a neighbour's. Their pretty young daughter, embroidering behind the *caisse*, is politely trying to smother her grins.

After a round of the bookstores—where perhaps you may be disconcerted to find "Tarzan des Singes" in the window, flanked by "Rip, l'Homme Qui Dormit Vingt Ans"; and where you buy your Petit Larousse, that heavy but indispensable little travelling university—it may well be that you stop in at the American Express

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office to say hullo to the agent, Mr. White, and change some money. If you happen to be interested in books and plays, Mr. White is just the man to gossip with, for he used to be chauffeur to Mrs. Deland and also to Winthrop Ames. Mr. Ames used to have him read play MSS. now and then, and I was tempted to get his opinion on a script of my own that was in my trunk; but he was giving me nineteen and a half francs to the dollar, and I didn't want to do anything to lower the rate. Or perhaps Titania lures you into the Grands Magasins L. Ratti (M. Ratti is the Wanamaker of Cherbourg) to buy a waist for the Urchin. Here the hilarity is extreme when it is discovered that French urchins wear a kind of webbed corset with which their smallclothes are kept aloft; there was great grievance in the Urchin's bosom when he was made acquainted with this garment. I have promised it shall be quietly dropped overboard before we lift Sandy Hook again. A little quiet study of the wine merchants' windows provides good suggestions of new vintages to ask for. Vin d'Anjou, for instance, which costs two francs twenty-five per bottle in the town, though it rises to five or seven at the hotel. (At hotels where they cater to Americans it is hard to get them to serve you *vin ordinaire*. The little man with the green apron comes for your order, and unless you are very stiff with him he'll send you something with a label on it.)

To be perfectly fair all round, Titania and I went one evening to a meeting, presided over by the Mayor, held by the *Ligue Nationale contre l'Alcoolisme*, followed by an uproariously bad movie, "The Double Life of Doc-

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tor Moraud." But the film kept breaking and finally they quit with it unfinished, just at the point where the luckless Doctor Moraud, eminent surgeon and secret helot of *eau de vie*, is about to trepan the fractured skull of his son's fiancée; but on the way to the hospital, while his motor was having a *pneu* changed, he has dodged into a groggery to indulge himself. He totters to the operating table with palsied hand . . . here the celluloid snapped again, and the Mayor got up and said that the operator had had such trouble with the machine that they would have to call it off. Without any of the ironical booing we should have expected, the large audience rose calmly and sifted out. The French take their movies very tranquilly and, odd as it may seem, on a warm clear summer evening they prefer sitting outdoors and watching the sunset, fishing along the docks, or sipping the Raphael-citron that is the favourite bourgeois *apéritif*.

In fact, the "light sane joy of life," as Kipling said in his famous poem, is very evident. It seems based on a certain calm acceptance of necessary facts of living, a simple and hardy jocularity in plain pleasures that is sedative to those who have too long accustomed themselves to the Broadway temperament. The stone hamlets of the Cotentin, original home of so many of our race, are now as grey and lichened as Jobourg's Nose itself. There is something very pitiful about those rude thatched dwellings taking shelter under the pent of a gorse-gemmed hill. Life is reduced almost to its animal rudiments; the ruddy old women jogging back from Cherbourg market in their high-wheeled carts

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have an almost speechless tranquillity, lulled into a warm doze of the wits by the lyric humming of thin little telephone wires in the breeze. The dusty byways are patterned with the nailprints of their frugally bossed footgear; on the very soil one reads the mark of their pious and necessary thrift. Larks, little mounting flutters of song, keep earnestly pushing up the sky for fear it will tumble. By the village churches are the washing pools, always with a cross or sacred effigy to bless the wholesome work; the women kneel to paddle the linen just as they would kneel to pray, and hardly know one from the other; nor does it greatly matter. Surely the great clerics need not be alarmed at the government's withdrawing its embassy from the Vatican: the church's share in French life is not pilared upon embassies. And if they all wear black when they approach the church, what race has more reason to? See the little war monument at Barfleur, where the names of seven Renoufs of one family are written on the stone. It makes one wamble a bit to think of the million villages of Europe, all those frugal people going about their hard and harmless concerns, cutting their hay and arranging their local fêtes with the children riding on a *petit manège* (or merry-go-round) turned by hand, and meanwhile the pride and stupidity and harassment of politicians can slide the whole thing toward fiendish catastrophe. Then one can understand better the grimness of the Communist placards, pasted on the stone walls of country barns, calling on the *ouvrier* and *paysan* to throw out their bourgeois deputies, and hallooing generals in the Chamber as "*assassins*."

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We spent one long sunny and windy afternoon at the Pentecost horse races, to which all Cherbourg turns out, from the neighbourhood aristocrats with silk hats and field glasses to the old grey-eyed peasant women in their lace-and-linen coifs, and hundreds of the coloured Senegalese troops in their scarlet bellhop caps. These amiable savages are so absurdly like the American elevator boy that it seems grotesque to hear them jabbering French. I suppose they make in a year about what a New York hat-checker pockets on a Saturday night;—but I don't know that they're less happy. One consoling feature of human life is that wherever you go you find the people quite innocently certain that to be where they are and to do what they are doing is the normal and sensible thing.

But as agreeably revealing evidence of the French enjoyment of simple pleasures I clipped a little piece from the Cherbourg paper, describing how *La Musique* of Hainneville, a sort of singing society in the suburbs, made its first picnic of the season. I please myself by translating with faithful literalness:

At 1 hour 30 the musicians, assembled on the Place de la Mairie, announced by the execution of a morsel the approaching departure for Urville; then, in the name of all the members of *La Musique*, a magnificent object of art was offered to the leader, M. Henri Avoine, on the occasion of this first expedition. Very much touched by this gesture of sympathy, M. Avoine renewed his promise to do all his possible to develop and lead to worthiness the work undertaken.

At the issue of this little manifestation, *La Musique* put itself on the road, followed by about 120 persons,

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whose number continued to augment all the length of the traject, attaining approximately 450 near Querqueville, and that in spite of the storm, menacing more and more.

All went well as far as Urville, where the excursionists arrived toward 4 hours.

Unfortunately the storm, which burst out almost at once, hindered all the world from taking its diversions, whether on the beach or in the various quarters of the coquettish little town of Urville, and one had to content himself, after the crust-breaking, by making a ball in the interior of the spacious restaurant Renard, when it might otherwise have taken place in the open air, in the superb shrubbery of this establishment.

The return effectuated itself in some excellent conditions and without the least incident, the rain having completely ceased to fall and the gaiety not having ceased to prevail during the whole traject. Toward 8 hours 30 *La Musique* reëntered triumphantly into Hainneville, having been acclaimed everywhere on its course, going and coming.

Wherever you wander, through the astoundingly ancient crooked lanes of the town, sometimes among smells that explain the French passion for perfumery, you find yourself led back toward the harbour. To me, since childhood, docks and railway sidings have always been the most fascinating places to prowl; at Cherbourg you have them both in one. Along the *digue* beyond the *gare maritime* one can study the constant movement of the harbour: pilot boats coming in and out, the fishing fleet with amber sails, and also see the restaurant cars cleaning and getting ready to cater to more Americans. Apparently the stewardesses of

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those cars live in them and cook their own meals, for you'll see them, bare-legged, early in the morning, washing down the woodwork, a little waver of smoke coming from the kitchen stovepipe. If it's one of those bright mornings of early June, as blue as an alcohol flame, the railway men who are off duty will be down on the shingle, paddling. Frenchmen always seem to be able to take a few hours off during the day to go wading. Very likely they are picking up kindling; for when the Urchin and I wanted a billet of wood to make a toy boat, we scoured the beach and environs for many furlongs without finding a single scrap. Finally we had to go to the boatyard and beg a small piece left over from the fishing smack *Bienheureuse Thérèse* which they were building. But if you don't find any bits of wood lying idle on a French beach, neither do you find any housekeeping refuse. Some of our American seaside towns might well be named Cannes.

Cherbourg is justly proud of her harbour and proud of her shipyards. When the *Mauretania* was overhauled there lately, on account of a strike in the English yards, there was great exultation in the town. Then, on her first succeeding voyage, a propeller dropped off. This elicited an editorial in the Cherbourg *Eclair*, pointing out that no work had been done on the propellers while the *Mauretania* was in the *chantiers* of Cherbourg. In fact, said the editor, perhaps it was exactly the fact that our Cherbourg workmen *hadn't* overhauled the *hélices* that caused one of them to falter under the excessive strain of the hitherto-unheard-of celerity at which the vast vessel was marching after

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the invigorating repairs made to the machine by our expert mechanics. Local pride, happily, is the same all the world round.

Titania would never quite agree with me as to the fun of patrolling the railway sidings, reading the *étiquettes* on the freight cars. But that is how I learn my French, such as it is. The study of posters, advertisements, municipal notices, all sorts of random *affiches*, I find more useful than a phrase book. I didn't begin to get the hang of the subjunctive until I found it on the label of my matchbox. "*Ne jetez jamais vos allumettes avant qu'elles soient entièrement éteintes.*" And sometimes the bills-of-lading pasted on the sides of freight cars will tell you more truth about what's going on than the daily paper. While some of the journals were expressing alarm that the first thing M. Herriot and his "bolshevik" government would do would be to evacuate the Ruhr, I found freight cars loaded with gun carriages marked for *l'Armée sur Rhin*. For the most part, though, I found those quaint little wagons (with their famous legend *Hommes 40, Chevaux 8*) loaded with matters more to my pacific taste: potatoes and carrots from the Farmers' Syndicate of Barfleur, or officers' horses from Saint Lô coming to take part in the races.

Meditation along these docksides gave me excellent opportunity to fortify my verbal resources. Amply provided with nouns of all sorts, my methods of putting them together in trains of speech are as primitive as the French way of shunting freight cars with an elderly horse. It was on the sidings of Cherbourg that I in-

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vented my trick to avoid the embarrassment of genders—always use all nouns in the plural and without qualifying adjectives. Do not say, for instance, *I love this old church*, for then you've got to know whether "church" is male or female. Say rather *One loves churches*. This lends a plain and even a quite lofty flavour to one's style, full of an 18th-century tincture, a Ben Franklin aphoristic and moralizing touch that must be soothing to the French ear. And indeed one is perpetually charmed by the infinite courtesy with which they hear us mangle their pronunciations. I was trying to imagine what would be the English phonetic equivalent for some of my utterances. When I ask the way to a village church it probably sounds to the native as though someone said to me, at home, "Ow wass it pleeze pozeable for locating ze sharsh?" These difficulties, and one's necessary limitations to the simplest formulæ (avoiding all *situations presque inénarrables*) have their charms, however; particularly for one whose trade is to deal in language. One uses one's own tongue so glibly, the words arriving in the mouth almost unconsciously, that it is an enormous advantage to study seriously, at a mature age, the actual hooks and couplings by which a foreign speech is put together—how, to pursue my railway metaphor, these little baggage trucks of nouns and adjectives are made into trains, conjunctioned to the engine of a verb, and puffed off to carry their cargo to some destination. You find yourself looking (with a new respect) at an English sentence to remind yourself just how it is done. Was not one of the secrets of Mr. Conrad's rich

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appeal that he always dealt with English in the tenderness of one to whom it came not by birthright but as a long arduous acquisition? So you go about your rounds in the town, picking up a phrase here and there, sticking in a subjunctive now and then for good measure, acquiring the dainty technic of shopping, and blundering in and out of places that look for all the world like square-meal restaurants but which serve only liquids. "Don't the French ever *eat* anything?" cried Titania in despair, one evening when we had tried three or four cafés looking for some supper, but could find nothing but *apéritifs* and music. Of course, one learns the stunts in time; just as the pipe smoker can even learn to inure himself to that Scaferlati tobacco; but at first the instinct of the foreigner leads him with unerring certainty to do the wrong thing.

Our dallying in Cherbourg was not mere indolence, nor due entirely to the picturesqueness of the town. There we were solidly based on two of the very few bathtubs in the Cotentin—a great advantage to travellers with small children—and these large china receptacles constituted our G. H. Q. while prospecting for a summer home farther down the coast. That was why we covered so much country with M. Le Cornu, and as an introduction to French ways of living and thinking I urge house-hunting. You see innumerable domestic interiors of all sorts, and you learn, away from the life of hotels, how wrong are those travellers who insist on thinking of the French as rapacious. I recall one of our early expeditions when we passed a travelling coffee vendor, sitting on his little cart which was being pulled

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through the dust and hot sunshine by two hardy mongrels. His dogs were both so like an animal I was once greatly attached to, a certain Mr. Gissing, that I couldn't resist asking him if it would *déranger* him if I took a photo. He was quite pleased, cried his dogs to a smart trot, and came gaily along while I snapped the lens. In the subsequent palaver he spoke very fast and with a difficult accent, saying several times that it was very warm, and something about a *bistro* a little farther along the road. This I didn't quite grasp, but supposed he was suggesting that having taken his picture I might now stand him a drink. But when I began to haul out some money I was embarrassed to find that he had been offering to treat *me*; and this though we had spun past him in a car and probably looked to him like millionaires. The situation was painful, but we got by it all right, and he accepted, after some protest, a five-franc note. He said it was too much money for a drink, but I insisted that the dogs also should have one. And at this moment the Urchiness created a diversion by falling into a deep ditch of water hidden in the long grass at the roadside. When we left him our friend was sitting happily at the *bistro*, enjoying—if the sign was to be trusted—*Consommations du Premier Choix*.

By now, of course, settled householders in a Norman village, Titania and I know the essentials of rustic technic. We know how to bicycle into a strange hamlet, pick out the most promising café, and take our lunch sitting at a bare table in the kitchen, looking into the mouth of an enormous fireplace where a kettle of

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sausages is simmering over a charcoal fire; where the bare table is spread with knives and a huge haunch of bread, and you get your share of the great platter of vegetables that goes round to the teamsters and others who are on the adjoining bench. And you see the copper utensils on the wall, the war helmet in the place of honour over the hearth, and the mother-of-pearl clock. The two-franc *pourboire* you leave behind must not be given as a tip but as a gift to the small girl who watches shyly from the corner. These delicacies of deportment were beyond us in our early days in Cherbourg; but it was M. Le Cornu, I think, who set us on the right road. If you will note what are the hostelries approved by Baedeker, then you can find us at the opposite end of the town. Never, unless you introduce the topic, will your hostess admit that she knows you are foreigners. But she gives away her awareness by one invariable sign: she'll ask you if you would like to have tea with your meal.

And now, as I look back at my memories of Cherbourg, it is evening, that soft, gradual dusk; and though it may be drizzling a bit you stroll along the docks. Across the bridge, now out of use while the lock gates are open, the special train for Paris, crammed with the *Berengaria's* passengers, is just pulling out. Waiting for the bridge to reopen is a whole cross-section of the French provinces: the tiny trolley car with two girls as conductor and driver; the workman with his string bag carrying home two bottles of wine; the market cart with the dog underneath doing his best to help pull; small boys in black pinafores; a woman in

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sabots with a fishing pole; a little Citroën (like a yacht's dinghy on wheels) with a little man in it, equally minute and dapper, on his way to dance and game at the Casino. Those delightful little Citroëns! Even the name sounds fragrant, and I feel sure they ought to smell not of gasoline but of perfumery. Nothing is so precious as those first impressions of a foreign soil; never again are your eyes quite so sharply alert to the valuable comedies of contrast. And those passengers whom I see now, rolling in their lighted compartments toward Paris, may perhaps be right in hastening so wildly toward the capital. But I have a strange feeling that all the breath and essence of France may not necessarily be in Paris; and sometimes one wants to do one's devotions singly, not among other thousands.

And so when the time came to leave Cherbourg it was with the surprised feeling, not at all anticipated, that one had made a new friend, a friend who could not henceforth be omitted from one's happy memories. On that last evening, smoking a pipe along the quay, I met a young man from the real-estate agency who had joined some of our excursions and had been specially patient with our absurdities. We had a stroll together, and his English being about on a level with my French, we promised to correspond each in the other's language. His letter happens to be in reach of my hand, for I have been using it to prop up one leg of my typewriter, the table in the thatched cottage where I am now writing being a bit uneven. I take the liberty of copying a bit of it, as I can think of no better testimony in honour of French friendliness.

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Do you remember [he writes], of the nice evening passed in Jobourg? A evening like that one was too short. Yes, because it is always very tedious to leave some nice people. I think the little Christopher [he means the Urchin] is pleased to pass her holidays in the beautiful country of the France. I want he must be enjoying of the France and of the French people for he must be latter a friend of the France. I think, dear sir, that you can manage with your French. I think so because you speak already very well. May be after your stay in France it shall be impossible for you to speak English. It must not.

I am pleased to send you this little letter and be sure if you may be I am a friend for you.

I think that the typewriter will march very steadily with that little wad of affectionate simplicity for a support. A common phrase in France nowadays is "*Plutarch a menti*"—"Plutarch lied." You see the book of that title in all the bookshops. And, as far as Cherbourg is concerned, Baedeker lied too.



WHEELS ON PARNASSUS

THE bicycle, the bicycle surely, should always be the vehicle of novelists and poets. How pleasant if one could prove that a decline in literary delicacy followed the disappearance of the bike from American roads. After eleven years without one, here I am in a country where the bicycle abounds. My memory returns to old Shotover, the tall green curio I bought in England in 1910. She had a queer double frame, much stared at by rustics from Basel to Auld Reekie, from the Cotswolds to the Wash. Delightful British pushbikes, some of them even used to have multiple gears. Not that I am disloyal to the automobile. For I know the peculiar thrill of motor cars, how one learns to love the steady drumming of their faithful organs, the gallant arch of the hood as it goes questing,

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like a sentient creature, along dazzling roads. Yet in a car you are carried; on a bike you go. You are yourself integral with the machine.

The bicycle is to me a kind of symbol of those old careless days long ago. How cheering to find still posted, on country inns in France, the emblem of the Cyclists' Touring Club, of which one was once a member, and whose little identification card was accepted (Oh, simple days!) as a passport. One always sought out the hostleries with that sign, because they were supposed to give the members a reduced rate for "bed and breakfast." And how they hated to do it. One wonders if the young French person on that Rhine steamer remembers herself of the three eccentric youths with the C. T. C. badges. She was a damsel of rather free manners, just the kind of person Jean Jacques was always encountering on his travels. The C. T. C. emblems roused her curiosity, and she asked what they were. "Mademoiselle," replied one of the trio, "it is the Club Terrestre de la Chasteté."

And speaking of the C. T. C., has everyone forgotten the jolly old L. A. W.—the League of American Wheelmen? That too had its literary flavours, for was not Mr. S. S. McClure editor of its magazine?

It is when you come back to bicycling, after long dispractice, that you realize how exquisite a physical art it is. Once more that strong tightness of the thigh muscles, once more the hot sun on the shoulder blades, the odd shift in bodily *tenue* when you have to push on foot up a long hill (comparable to the flatness of walking after skating, or that uneasiness in a ship in still

Wheels on Parnassus

harbour after days at sea). As you spin down aisles of hedgeway you can ponder the daintily equilibrated poise that makes those two wheels your obedient Siamese twins. I read once of a savage chief in Africa who was given an old bicycle and a top hat, in exchange for a caravan of ivory, I suppose. He traversed the sunbaked paths near his village riding the one and wearing the other, hallooing with innocent glee. I can understand his feelings. If one wears a hat at all while biking it might as well be the silk cylinder of fashion, to express a sense of psychic and carnal welfare. In a recent play, "Roger Bloomer," one of the characters remarked, "I wear a silk hat as a charm against passion." The bicycle also is an amulet against various disorders. To see before one a forked or meandering road, a wedge-towered Norman church in the valley, to explore the fragrance of lanes like green tunnels, to hear the whispering hum beneath you and the rasp of scythes in a hayfield, all this might well be homœopathic against passion, for it is a passion itself.

But these letters are adjured to have some bearing on literary matters. So let's take this turning on the left (which leads across links toward the sea) and sit on the dunes to think out our rearward idea. A warm southwest gale is creaming the surf on to the beach; the sandy turf, sheep-cropped, is speckled with small pink and yellow flowers.

An odd feeling comes sometimes to a writer who has long carried in the knapsack of the mind some notion that he wants to put in ink. It is a sensation I can only describe as Getting Ready to Write. Those phantoms

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of imagination, so long halted frozen in mid-gesture, begin to show marks of animation. In my particular case, it is now four and a half years that I have seen them sitting in their absurd unchanged attitudes. No wonder they are stiff: one of them (what a dear she is!) told me her foot had gone to sleep. They are sitting round a table, it is a birthday party. You would think that the cake must be very stale by this time, the little red candles guttered out. But no: I can see them burning steadily, the bright untrembling candles of a dream. Even in the puppet postures where I left them I can see those phantoms strangely show an air of expectation. Something must be done about it.

In these moods bicycling seems perfectly the right employ. It is all very well to say to yourself that you are not thinking as you wheel serenely along; but you *are*, and that sure uncertainty of the cyclist's balance, that unconsciously watchful suspension (solid on earth yet so breezily flitting) seems to symbolize the task itself. The wheel slidders in a rut or on a slope of gravel: at once, by instinct, you redress your perpendicular. So, in the continual joy and disgust of the writer's work, he dare not abandon that difficult trained alertness. How much of the plain horror and stupidity is he to admit into his picture? how many of the grossly significant minutiae can he pause to include? how often shall he make a resolute fling to convey that incomparable energy of life that should be the artist's goal above all? These are the airy tinkerings of his doubt: and as he passes from windy hill-top to green creeks and grazings sometimes the bicycle sets him

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free. He sees it all afresh: nothing, nothing has ever been written yet: the entire white paper of the world is clean for his special portrait of all hunger, all joy, and all vexation. In the sunny market-place, sitting on a warm stone under the statue of the *poilu*, he feels that noble thrill of living and being surrounded by similar life. Even ants in an ant-hill feel it too, I dare say.

Blundering with a foreign language there sometimes comes a moment when you find, astonished, that you have talked for a few sentences fluently and without conscious choice. Just so, in unexpected purities of feeling, you are aware that for an instant you might almost have stammered a phrase or two of the strangest foreign tongue, the universal cryptograms of beauty that legislatures are too busy to hear. This was the language, for instance, that Llewelyn Powys glimpsed between the lines when he read Matthew Arnold in the wilderness of Africa. He tells about it in his glorious "Black Laughter," a book richly written, with the savour of an old, old speech; one of those rarest of books, a book written not in dialect but in English sound and sparkling from the ancient cellars of the language.

So you climb on your bicycle again, renewing in your nostrils the summer sweetness of this divine and anxious land, and swim off with the Southwest at your back. What a book it would be if one could truly write just a straight record of one human farce. What an audacious book, with the title "For I So Loved the World."



THE BENEDICTINE STYLE

SURROUNDED in and by a foreign language, we become the more sharply conscious of our own. Studying books, newspapers, even random scraps of advertisement and *affiche*, intent to discern exactly how this ingenious palaver conveys itself, a gruesome thought arrives. Suppose there were, somewhere, an earnest foreigner, ill acquainted with English, carefully reading *us*, and wondering plaintively (perhaps with his dictionary handy) whether our stuff is pure and good; as a means of communication, that is. We are suddenly aware that in our own tongue most of us hardly know whether we are writing "well" or not. And we resume, all the more determined to root out the essential qualities of French style, our study of the nearest text, which happens to be the circular wrapped

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round the neck of this bottle of Benedictine we are opening. It reads agreeably enough.

La partie active de la véritable Bénédictine est presque exclusivement composée de plantes croissant sur les falaises de Normandie, récoltées et infusées au moment de la sève et de la floraison.

That seems straightforward and plain. Some of the prettiest of the *falaises de Normandie* are right in front of this house; we take our sunset stroll there every evening.

Ces herbacées par leur voisinage de la mer, encore toutes saturées de brome, d'iode et de chlorure de sodium, développent et conservent dans les liquides spiritueux et sucrés, leurs principes vivifiants et salutaires.

We understand now why the skylarks sing so wittily over those rocky cliffs. But we begin to be a little leery of the *Anciens Moines Bénédictins de l'Abbaye de Fécamp* as stylists. They are what Frank Adams has called Coupling Kates. They are never satisfied with a celibate noun, verb or adjective.

On peut ainsi résumer ses qualités: Netteté de goût, onctuosité franche et bien fondue. . . . Nul aussi n'a jamais contesté ses vertus antiapoplectiques, apéritives, digestives et antispasmodiques; lorsqu'elle est étendue d'eau.

There is much here to ponder, we conclude, as we take our coffee in the garden. How, in literary matters, is one to attain distinction of taste, combined with a frank and well-founded unctuousity?

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We come next upon M. Abel Bonnard, the occasional essayist of the *Journal des Débats*, who gently chides the President of the Republic for the formula he used in opening the Olympic games. M. Doumergue said, "*Je proclame l'ouverture des Jeux olympiques.*" M. Bonnard suggests that "*Je déclare ouverte*" would have been "more sober and more lapidary." It is evident that M. Bonnard must be heeded; he has lately been awarded the *Grand Prix de Littérature* by the French Academy. He is disturbed by the slovenly use of language in some official quarters, particularly the wireless operator on the Eiffel Tower, whose verbal taste is not as lofty as his station in life. A Tower of Babel, evidently. But happy man and happy nation, still to expect some classic gusto of speech even in politics. We Americans certainly count on our spokesmen being sober; but not lapidary—not in any literary sense.

So it is delightful to see how prompt the French are to reproach—among themselves—the negligent use of their language. I pick up Professor Strowsky's "*Renaissance Littéraire de la France Contemporaine*," and find him tackling even so well-known a writer as M. Pierre Benoit:

Le français de M. Benoit n'est pas toujours très sûr. Qui peut se vanter d'écrire un français impeccable? Personne? Si, cependant! Celui qui, ayant pour ami un écrivain difficile et attentif, se confie entièrement à cet ami. Celui-ci a des chances de parler français. Puisque M. Pierre Benoit admire Jules Tellier, qu'il me permette de lui dire combien Tellier était attentif et sévère, pour soi et pour les autres! Je sais un écrivain,

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aujourd'hui justement illustre, dont il épluchait phrase à phrase, et mot à mot, le style, pour le rendre impeccable. Et cet écrivain acceptait avec une vive reconnaissance ces corrections minutieuses et implacables. M. Benoit a besoin d'un tel ami.

This charmingly expresses the seriousness with which the French consider literary deportment. To them, perhaps, the very highest virtue resides in a quality that, *chez nous*, has become sometimes a term of disregard, "academic." I shall not expose my own thoughts about Professor Strowsky's suggestion. But it is interesting to consider, suppose one did want to submit a MS. to some American writer, to be impeccable, "picked over, phrase by phrase," whom would you trust? I should like to see Doctor Canby give us a list.

Our ignorances of one another's languages lead to many situations that are hilarious; but also, among those whose business it is to manœuvre important affairs, to awkward moments. When the British premier was in Paris the other day to confer with M. Herriot, a quaint thing happened—at least, if the reporter of the *Echo de Paris* is to be trusted. Mr. MacDonald, worn out after exhausting conferences, was ready to leave the Quai d'Orsay to catch his train for Calais. The motor car was waiting. He climbed in. The French premier, eager to show his guest every courtesy, intended to drive with him to the station. But in the flurry of the moment M. Herriot had come out bareheaded. "Wait a minute, I'll get my

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hat and stick," he said—in French, of course. "I'm going with you." But the interpreter, whose duties were over, wasn't there. Mr. MacDonald did not understand. M. Herriot rushed for his hat, but when he returned a moment later the car was already driving off. He had to find a taxi and hasten after it. Now this tiny incident may have been tinted by the reporter of a paper which is not very generous toward either of these statesmen. But it's the kind of thing that might happen and does happen in human affairs, and on which, sometimes, great destinies depend. In the less momentous circles where the interests of *littérateurs* revolve, our mutual ignorances are equally deplorable. I read, in a speech made by M. André Chevrillon—who understands English literature so intimately—that de Musset's "Lorenzaccio" is "*la tragédie la plus shakespéarienne qui ait été écrite depuis Shakespeare en aucune langue.*" If that is true, why had we not been told so more often; or at any rate more effectively? I suppose it is because even in the parliaments of literature there are always occurring so many "exclamations, diverse movements, and noise at the extreme Left," as the French papers describe sessions of the Chamber of Deputies.

It is odd how one evening's desultory reading will often seem to keep itself in the same channel. Before my eyelids dropped their shade—do I have to put in the quotation marks?—I happened upon a brief account of a speech made by a well-known Frenchman at a banquet of an organization that abbreviates itself "The U. C. B. B. A." I shall not attempt to unlace

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the initials. But the paragraph deserves *verbatim* translation for students of the human comedy.

M. —, greeted by the acclamations of the extremely numerous attendance, congratulated the U. C. B. B. A. for its vitality and progress, emphasizing with powerful eloquence that in the dangerous crisis which confronts contemporary society, the essential task is to restore personal, domestic, professional, and social morality, and that it is precisely this task of salvation that the U. C. B. B. A. so happily pursues.

So there is one kind of style that is current in all languages. I fear that to describe it we have to fall back on our old Benedictines of Fécamp. Frank unctuousity . . . *étendue d'eau*.



THE SENSE OF SIGNIFICANCE

THE field at the top of the cliff, overlooking the sea, has been shaved; cut down to short, soft stubble, blanched and sweetened by the sun. The skylarks who nested in those cool tangles of long grass have moved elsewhere, I suppose; perhaps to the fairy isles of Chausey that notch the western brim. Chausey might well be a sort of Penguin Island. After watching its purple stains on the skyline through a month of clear sunsets, it was rash to pay them actual visit. Rewarded rashness, though, for even in a drizzle there was no disillusion in those seaweed-matted clumps of granite, joined by webs of sand into one continent at the ebb, insulated again at high tide, a sprinkle of surf-banged crags. A tiny strait serves as harbour for a few smacks; there is an abandoned fort (of Napoleon III's

The Sense of Significance

era); a stone chapel with the customary ship model hanging as flattery to the gods of gale. Even the dour château of M. Renault, the automobile magnate, suggests that special tinge of feeling that one describes as Romance. One remembers it was not far away, in similar scenes, that Victor Hugo found his "Travailleurs de la Mer."

So the blue scissorings of Chausey, seen from our seaward cliff at sunset, have not lost by visit their fairy-land suggestion. Even are they more precious by memory of the homeward voyage, when the *Mouette* (an open launch of fifty feet, carrying one sail) wallowed and capered in a drenching southwester. Unsheltered, the crowded passengers sat trickling, and in more violent rollings were hardly appeased by the master's remark "*N'y a pas de danger, n'ayez pas peur!*" Always alert for the frolic French subjunctive, I remembered that it is used chiefly in expressions suggesting uncertainty and doubt. Ladies were ill, even quite hardy masculines aware of that quaint impulse to yawn which is the token of an entrail not wholly stable. But excellent is the stoicism of the Gaul. A stout grizzled gentleman wearing the ribbon of Madagascar campaigns many years ago, who had lunched on shrimps, rhubarb confiture, *Calvados* (brandy made from cider), and other notables of Norman picnicking, was faintly tinct with green under his summer tan. Yet when a special spout of spray came inboard down his nape, he merely shifted a little on sopping quarters and remarked "*Ce n'est pas chic.*" He is a rather famous Parisian modiste, which somehow makes his phrase

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all the more pleasant. The tall cliffs of Granville were a welcome sight looming through pelting squalls, as our *Mouette* came boiling and staggering under their lee.

On these grassy headlands, idly watching the profile of the old fortified rock a mile away, there is much to ponder which is not idle. Studying the long bend of the gulf beneath, the various tinting of sea, the brown-purple shadow masses in distant scarps of cliff, a writer is tempted to envy the pictorial artist who has his fundamental material so seizable, so suggestive, so takeably to hand. The story-teller's job seems desperately more nebulous. Totally from gossamer nothing, your effect shall be contrived; without even the dexterous physical amusement that helps to keep the painter absorbed and happy. Against that sword-coloured sky, vast with the empty glimmer of evening, you are promptly aware of human mirth and movement as a silhouetted pattern. How, out of all that confusing richness, to choose the exactly necessary trifles that will propose the desired emotion? One can only fall back on the instinctive Sense of Significance, that subtle and massive intuition that must be (for every type of creator, I suppose) the captain of his seven deadly senses.

The Sense of Significance! Yes, that occult and instantaneous decision that certain gestures, certain random incidents, are necessary parts of the artistic composition of our own world. This instinct is capricious and quick, often one is puzzled to know why such petty observations come full of meaning, magically confluent with the dark undercurrent of the mind. I can only illustrate by mentioning shortly a few poor

The Sense of Significance

silly glimpses that seemed to me lately (I did not know why) to have peculiar magic. It is hard to be so terse; but as that excellent Abel Bonnard said the other day, "*Il n'est pas mauvais de s'exercer à parler en bref de ce qu'on aime.*"

At Plymouth: my first sight of England in eleven years. The *Lancastria* at anchor under the green steeples where Drake played the world's most famous game of bowls. Coming down the cabin alley I saw a gull poised outside. He floated there on wings, framed in the brass circle of the porthole, looking at me with a cruel fanatical eye. Just behind him was the little harbour where the *Mayflower* set sail. Was there accusation in his look? "What have *you* done to justify the faith of those tough yachtsmen?"

On a great spread of beach at low tide: a warm vacant afternoon, the smell of hay blowing down from the cliffs mixed with the strong acid of the sea. Far above, continual twitter of larks, the ear unconsciously sharpening itself to follow their wiry tinkle to the height where it blurs with your own blood-stroke. In that sunny vacuum of feeling, a chime from the church a mile away. The wave of deep sound booms overhead. Then, after the passage of the note, a smaller following vibration, an actual quaver of air felt rather than heard, a magically secret ripple in the blue, the gently churning wake of those thick pushing clangs. That infinitesimal tremble, swimming in soft space, was like hearing the actual movement of some

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strange law of life. A French lady told me the other day that on that beach, in a certain slope of sunlight, she had seen one of the bathers apparently surrounded by a halo of brightness. I know that one afternoon I went far along the coast, toward a weatherbeaten house that stands solitary by the sea. It had beckoned me since I first saw its outline in the distance. When I got near it I recognized it at once. I had seen that same house, or at least one sufficiently like it, a year before, in a dream.

A heavy tinker's wagon, drawn by one horse. Underneath, harnessed to the axle, a small terrier, pulling mightily, doing his best to help along. His tongue hung dripping, he strained fiercely at his leather hitchings, his tail curled upward with delighted enthusiasm. Why did that dog suddenly strike me as full of parable? I looked again. The wagon was going down a steep hill, and both horse and tinker were doing their best to hold back the load against the grade. But their valiant consort was still doing his forward possible, as usual.

Bicycling in a green woodland, round a corner I found a little avenue among trees. Bordered with flowers it led to an oddly fantastic house, an old stone mansion that had been built over with modern additions. And above the front door, a large statue of seated Buddha. Reading Montaigne one afternoon in the garden, I heard a melancholy chanting outside the wall, the slow shuffle of feet passing by. So many songs and oddities go down a French village road that pres-

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ently one is too incurious to look out; besides, I was absorbed in the good old gentleman's apologies for his stupidity, his ignorance even of the names of the vegetables in his garden. But I heard our old Julie click the latch and look out. What is it? I called. She came to me with a grave face. "A funeral," she said; and added, with a certain relish, "*Un enterrement de première classe.*"

But nor sunset ponderings, nor reading Montaigne, will help one much in trying to set in order the task that he has planned. These things abide the fortune of the inkwell. Even Montaigne must sometimes have laboured and brought forth a mouse.





THE LATIN QUARTER

I

IT'S amusing to come back after twelve years to the little book-lined Rue de la Sorbonne with its tinny chimes and tiny hotels; and to find the old Gerson, that seemed so 'darkly wicked and Murgeresque in one's student era, really so placid and respectable. How adorably satanic we believed it in those rainy spring days of 1912! Even the staircase was an *escalier à tire-bouchon*: a corkscrew—six steep spirals to be climbed, but a real *gradus ad Bohemiam* which gave an agreeable sense of unbottling the bright vintage of hilarity; though the three young men in the attics had little need of real corkscrews. Cocoa was their frugal brew, cooked for themselves. With excited awe they gazed into that grimy little courtyard at the rear, where a young woman used to come to the window, in occasional lustres of sunshine, to shake out her long hair and bask herself in smallclothes. She had merely

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been shampooing, I dare say: but these lads asked themselves, with all Mark Twain's eagerness, was this the fabled *grisette*? But there are few Rapunzels nowadays. That virginal notion of the gay sinfulness of Paris, inalienable conviction of every Anglo-Saxon youth, can never quite be recaptivated. The transplanted Greenwich Villagers who are said to frequent the *Dôme* and the *Rotonde* probably degust the same ecstasy. The half-world (so those logical students of 1912 figured it) would naturally be divided into two quarters—the Latin Quarter and Montmartre. They spent their time coasting from one to the other, occasionally pausing (in purple jacket and velvet *béret*) at the American Express office, to give the despised "tourists" a valuable glimpse of Life with the dotted *i*. Their spirit was as engagingly frolic as that of the fellow in blue jerkin and asses'-ears hood who rides the donkey in the Parchment Fair painting in the cloister of the Sorbonne. If it had been customary to express devotion to this university by sweaters with a large S on the chest, I feel sure they would have worn them. They knew nothing of *Dômes* and *Rotondes*: they wrote their letters at the Café de la Source on the Boule' Mich', because Stevenson had done so at their age. Because they were young libertads, they went to hear Jaurès. . . . And now Le Penseur has left the Panthéon and Jaurès is going there. Murger and de Musset and Baudelaire aren't what the young Latin Quarter reads now: it reads André Gide. I was going to say something about M. Gide's "Corydon," but I have just seen a little troop of clear-eyed and divinely

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placid American librarians trotting reverently into the Panthéon. I prefer not to disturb them with the odd matters that French intellectuals discuss.

It is in a different spirit that the twelve-years-old student revisits the Latin Quarter, the Promised Land of booksellers, where each byway seems one more shelf in an endless library. Certainly not in a disillusion, but in a changed illusion; for life, I hope, is a series of gently shifting hallucinations. The Latin Quarter, where we students feel so instinctively *chez nous*, still has its divine magic. Still, absurdly enough, the sight of those innumerable books, or the pale statue of Comte, the pensive stone faces of Pasteur and Victor Hugo, thrill us to adventure more burningly our own imagined toils. But we carry in our pocket nowadays a little roll of *papier gommé transparent* to mend the brittle ten-franc notes that have such a way of coming in half. It's a kind of symbol.

We have had—in these twelve years—to mend so many scraps of paper with transparent adhesives. We have learned that even the brave life of literature and the arts has its hokums and trickeries. That it is not always the man with the most conical beard and broadest-brimmed black hat who is the greatest poet. Even the Quarter no longer proclaims the Rights of Man, “in the presence of the Supreme Being,” quite so confidently as in 1791 or thereabouts. We have learned that—even along the sacred Boule’ Mich’—the best-known products of the American arts are Jackie Coogan, J. O. Curwood, Wrigley’s “*friandise à mâcher*,” and . . . “Esquimaux Brick!” (Poor

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old Esquimaux Pie! Who would have expected to find it resurrected here?) And we note that the *Nouvelles Littéraires* can be just as carelessly proof-read and as full of pseudo-critical tripe as any of our own literary organs.

But do these little gummed transparencies invalidate our legal tender? Not a bit! Our dreams and amusements are all the merrier. We revel in the ingenuity of fraudulent book-jackets, admiring their sheer genius—*Ce récit galant narquois, qui nous révèle les intimités féminines, fait songer à certains contes du XVIII^{me} siècle. Il en a la forme agréable, la psychologie furtive, les audaces élégantes.* We almost pray for a rainstorm, to perfect the luxury of browsing in the book porches of the Odéon. If, in a famous theatre whose green-room is placarded with photos of managers and authors, enchantingly bearded, who *look* so like great artists, we encounter only a dull, dirty farce, does it not set one dreaming all the more valiantly of the piece one imagines from one's own inkpot? If one's eyes were always in the shop windows, one would miss the little coop on the pavement where an ingenious bartender has put a kennel with a trough of running water—Louigi's Dog's Bar, he calls it. The French are on much more intimate terms with dogs than we, and talk to them more understandingly. Compare Senator Vest's unholy palaver with what Charles Baudelaire wrote in "Petits Poèmes en Prose."—That the French have at least one frankly canine trait, I need not insist.

How one would like to condense, into a few hundred words, the exquisite flavour of the Quarter. In those

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quiet streets round St. Sulpice I study the windows of undertakers, stationers, pastry cooks, ecclesiastical publishers and tailors. How delightful it must be to get a bill from a French doctor. Thus he goes about it:

LE DOCTEUR G. RIBAUT

*prie.....
d'agréer l'expression de ses sentiments
les plus distingués et suivant l'usage,
lui adresse le note de ses honoraires
s'élevant à la somme de.....*

Or, if you are a parson and want a new hat, one of those sublime shallow-crown black platters, how pleasant to be able to get one that is marked *Dernier Style*. What business has a priest got worrying about the latest style in cassocks and soup-plate hats? This bothered me. In the vacation silence of the Sorbonne corridors, a familiar kind of protest is scrawled on the wall. We can translate it, gently, by "The examiners who flunked me are swine." The incessant ringing of the tramways keeps one hungry: they sound like boarding-house dinner bells at home. One goes back to the little coffee-bar, where the rolls are always waiting, split and buttered, in a neat crisscross pile, on the zinc counter.

But what is the reason of that curious intellectual exultation that the Quarter gives, that fecundity of impulse it offers to the artist, that sense that the mind is in its birthright element? I think you find its secret best in the Luxembourg gardens. Behind the flamboyant formality of the flower beds, behind the

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charming heedlessness and enjoyment, is a strange flavour of peaceful melancholy, of incredulity, of impossible hopes. Utterly different from New York, where the mind flows with the moment, here it seems as it were to touch bottom psychologically. There is a background of enchanted despair. The toy yachts are becalmed in the basin and will never come to port. The Medici fountain smells of sodden leaves and is a grand place to be sad. The great dusky Polyphemus looms over the sprawling lovers as the great laws of life eavesdroop over us all—proclaiming in the presence of the Supreme Being! The young men in black hats are goaded by the most unpleasant passions! (I refer you to M. Gide.) Outside the Comédie Française (the Comedy!) our darling de Musset's statue reminds us that the songs of despair are the sweetest of all.

I wonder if I'm wrong? I'm not trying to express my own feelings, which are trivial and don't matter. I am trying to serve as a film to photostat the genius of the place. In these brilliant Luxembourg flower beds I seem specially aware of this ancient channel of feeling in which emotions run. The Quarter is rich ground for the thinker because it has perfected, and made gracious and proud, the art of being unhappy.

II

I am waiting to hear the chime of the Sorbonne church strike eleven: I wanted to hear it again, to get the right word for it. *Tinny*, which I used last year, is certainly not right. It is a light, cool, insouciant little chime; but I don't catch the just adjective, and can only

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advise you to listen for it yourself. It is not ponderous nor monitory nor deeply musical: in fact it seems (as I suppose is natural in a Latin Quarter belfry) hardly a religious voice at all. It has in it something of the accent of Ronsard, something of Diderot, and just a faint clatter of glassware from the zinc café-bar round the corner. I will leave it at that, or it will use up all my space.

Paris would hardly be Paris for me if I didn't hear the Sorbonne bells; though it is disconcerting to hear them striking while you are writing an article: another fifteen minutes gone and you have only descended a dozen lines. And this ground-floor room at the corner of the Place (in case there are ladies in the audience) is the perfect chamber for high-spirited young women. For, if the toy *ascenseur* is "immobilized for reparations," as sometimes happens, there are no stairs to climb; and the passage outside our door is one long stretch of mirrors, where Titania can walk up and down adjudging the effect of a new hat just arrived from Mme. Sorbier in the rue Lafayette. But it grows very chilly toward midnight at the end of September. *Chauffage Centrale* has a genial sound on the notepaper; but when, one wonders, does it begin? If it hadn't been for my well-loved *zinc* (as you are to call a small bar of that sort, pronouncing it *zank*) which is warm and bright and full of Chinamen playing cards, I should hardly have enlivened my fingers enough to write this letter. But the café-crème with cognac only costs ten cents, and makes the most intimate of chauffages centrales.

I understand now why the Quarter spends its evenings

The Latin Quarter

in the cafés—to keep warm. I should have liked to bring in a small electric heater; but the list of prohibitions placarded on the wall is peremptory:—

All degradations in the rooms are at the charge of the guest. It is forbidden: to do cooking in the rooms, to wash linen, to branch any apparatus on the electric canalization and to modify in whatever it may be the existing installations, to introduce any animal or to make cooking come in from outside.

I haven't really much gift for loitering in cafés. I wish I had: for then I might be able to find out, what has always disquieted me, whether the Boule' Miche' prowlers who look so like poets really are. The fellow with the yellow raincoat, and yellow ringlets as long and curly as Bonny Prince Charley's; and the other fellow with the sleek bobbed hair, the tight-waisted coat, the monocle and cane and open polo-shirt; they are still strolling the pavement just as they were a year ago. What I want to know is, how many poems have they written in the meantime? I always have a horrid fear that they will prove to be merely commissionaires for the Phiteesi shoe-store that appals my eye in that sacred precinct; heaven only knows how profound a disillusion it was to my spirit to find that word Phiteesi in the Latin Quarter: fortunately even the most learned doctors of the Sorbonne probably don't suspect its meaning. But a man who has strength enough left to wrestle against disillusion has not really been damaged; his fancy dives inward and becomes more precious. I cling desperately to the hope that the Chinamen are not the only romantic figures along the Boulevard; that the

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young men whose signed photographs are thick over the comfortable fireplace in Sylvia Beach's charming bookshop ("To dear Sylvia with just oceans of love") really are geniuses; that these Murgerian profiles are truly libertines and literary critics. You remember O. Henry's little story about the hayseed who looked so obviously a hayseed that no bunco-man dared go after him. But he really was a hayseed. And Walt Whitman teaches me to be cautious. Walt would have been very miserable along the trottoir of the Boule' Miche', for no one would have noticed him. Yet, though he looked so like a poet that few good Philadelphians would touch him, he really was one.—And I don't even believe that Walt's French, deservedly merrimented by his readers, was any worse than that of the average American in Paris.

But I love to think of the young American of the better sort who comes, like the *naïf* scholar-gipsy he is, to make his pilgrimage to Paris. It is delightful to think of him, scandalized in small things that he may be, if he has understanding, uplifted in great. He has heard that the book-boxes along the Quais are the shrine of priest and philosopher; and the statue of Voltaire grins delightedly at his amazement to find the work most prominently displayed is "Fleshly Attraction, Translated from the French," carefully wrapped in strong twine. For that is the kind of delightful Vanity Fair and cheapjackery the world is: surely the photograph-pimp wouldn't work so hard unless real Beauty were near by; nor would it be worth while for so many people to dress like poets unless the sources of real

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poetry were just around the corner. And I doubt if my imagined pilgrim ever buys "Les Belles Flagellantes de New-York" even if he sees it every day on his way toward the Place Vendôme to ask for mail. If he has the jocund humour I like to credit him with, he has a smile when he goes into an antique-shop in the Boulevard St. Germain where he has seen some fine 18th-century leather-bound 12-mos in the window. He finds that they have been gutted to make cigarette-boxes, though still preserving, outwardly, their booklike appearance. He exclaims a little in protest at old books having been served so—"Ah," says the young woman, "they were only religious books."

The sapient pilgrim, if he were wise, would serve an apprenticeship in the provinces; he should be forbidden even to approach Paris until he had learned such elementary rules as never to allow a bottle of wine to be plunged into an ice-bucket—as the Paris restaurants have debauched themselves into doing under the notion that Americans like everything iced. He should avoid the eyes of Rue de la Paix jewellers peering fixedly over their velvet window-curtains, and should gaze in fascinated horror at the engravers' shops where Egyptian princes have their visiting cards displayed and among them the imposing pasteboard

MONSEIGNEUR GLASS BISHOP OF SALT LAKE

He should learn first, what the cosmopolitan glamour of Paris is not so likely to teach, something of the unspoiled simplicities of the French countryside. It

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would do him no harm to hunt out the French equivalent of the old lady from Dubuque. Then he will be capable, I think, of distinguishing the true Paris, who makes herself so scarce for untutored eyes. Then he will see that, faithful to her old motto, this real Paris, loved by all the world's lovers, fluctuates but is never merged. He won't waste his clear sunsets at some rowdy café but will see the little flotilla of toy yachts skimming the Luxembourg basin. Where the woman with a bunch of balloons stands at the head of the steps, the light pours through her red and blue globes; seen down the gold-bronze avenue they are translucent like floating jewels. And that mysterious sound of horses' hoofs that often comes at midnight down the narrow rue de la Sorbonne, will grow to have its mystic meaning. It is the tramp of some pilgrim cavalcade; it is the students of the world, coming as they always came, in faith and hope and gaiety, to the doors of the Sorbonne. Loved as perhaps no other city has ever been loved, our illusions are worthy of her.



THE WORKS OF M. CHAIX

M• PROUST has been greatly complimented on his rich treatment of the scruples of human psychology, but there is another French writer, widely read, who is also a master of infinitesimal detail. I refer to M. Chaix, the author (or at any rate compiler) of the *Livrets-Chaix*, a series of volumes not less endless than M. Proust's, and conscientiously revised and re-issued every month or so. M. Chaix's books are not only full of useful information and romantic suggestion, but they are also a whole compendium of French ways of thinking. How charmingly he expresses the French passion for minute codification, for getting things logically arranged and stated. M. Chaix is the real encyclopædist of etiquette—of getting things ticketed.

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And he makes you read between the lines; between vertical lines, indeed; for his books are time-tables.

But oh, much more than mere time-tables. M. Chaix's *livrets* (one for each railway company) are a synopsis of his nation's genius for getting things down in black and white—and then going ahead as may be most convenient. The French like to have a thing in writing, just to get it out of the way; not necessarily to adhere to it. Every time you buy a ticket at a French railway station you are reminded (by a placard) that according to the law of 1791 the vendor is not compelled to make change if not convenient. This gives you quite a thrill, seems to take you back to the days of Thermidor and Humidor and Cuspidor. But as a matter of fact, you will always get your change.

M. Chaix has the austerity of a great artist. People like John Ruskin and Henry Adams will try to spoil Mont St. Michel and Chartres for you by putting *their* thoughts into your head. But M. Chaix is never intrusive. All the loveliest places in France are mentioned in his works, but he never tells you what you ought to think about them. He confines himself to the real essentials, viz., how and when you can get there. Henry Adams will din you with his charming palaver about soaring gothic; but M. Chaix soberly states that the trains reach Mont St. Michel at 13:15, 18:5 and 19:30. He evidently worked it out with Mme. Poulard, the innkeeper, as those are just the times to order an omelet. Not a sparrow falls to the ground, by which I mean to say not a traveller misses a connection, but M. Chaix knows why it

The Works of M. Chaix

shouldn't have happened. He probably tried to "effectuate his transit" by way of Versailles Chantiers, where (if he had read the footnote on page 37) only first-class passengers without baggage were admitted to that train.

But I must give you (Oh! for more ample space) some notion of M. Chaix's attention to detail. It is he who makes plain the uplifting influence of American passengers upon dining-car tariffs. Lunch and dinner in the wagon restaurant, *vin non compris*, cost 7 francs and 12 francs; but in the boat trains, 18 francs. On the boat trains, wine costs $7\frac{1}{2}$ francs a bottle as against 3.25 in the regular expresses. M. Chaix tells you, to the minute, at what time you can eat on every train where eating is possible. Suppose you are going from Paris to Granville and want to lunch in the second sitting. You can eat from 12:15 to 13:47, not a minute longer. He has foreseen everything: if, for instance, you are a voyager of the second class and spend more than half an hour in the wagon restaurant between mealtimes, he knows that you will owe the difference between the second- and first-class fare "for the trajet unduly effectuated."

Let it not be thought, however, that M. Chaix is hard of heart. Whenever children or dogs are concerned, he strikes a note of tenderness.

In principle (he says) dogs are not admitted in the passenger carriages; but the company will place in special compartments travellers who do not wish to be separated from their dogs. Moreover dogs of modest stature, enclosed in cages, boxes, or baskets, can be

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kept in the compartments with the assent of their fellow passengers.

I find many evidences of M. Chaix being a family man, for he is specially kindly toward *Nombreuses Familles*. A Family Ticket of Going and Returning, he tells us, may be had when there travels with the parents a son of less than twenty-one or a daughter of less than twenty-five, and this ticket may also include "the ascendants of this infant; its celibate brothers and sisters of whatever age; two domestics (a male or female cook, a valet or chambermaid or infant's nurse) and if necessary a wet nurse." Below the age of three, he continues, infants pay nothing, on the condition that they are carried on the knees of their family. And among the baggages that may be taken in your compartment with you, he allows babies' bathtubs.

M. Chaix does his best to instil a spirit of foresight and prudence into his flock. I don't suppose any one, in the history of travel, ever followed his instructions for getting a carriage on arrival in Paris. This is what he wants you to do:

Address, 48 hours beforehand, either a letter or a telegram to the Special Carriage Bureau indicating the station and hour of arrival, the number of voyagers, the destination, and the type of carriage desired, whether automotive or of animal traction.

If you want to reserve a berth in a sleeper, M. Chaix urges you to go even more cautiously about it.

The demand for renting a berth must be made at least 4 days in advance; the applicant must deposit, at

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the same time, as an evidence of good faith, in the hands of the Station Master, a sum of 40 francs. If for any cause the reservations are not utilized on the day and train specified, the totality of the advance payment is definitely acquired by the Administration.

But I think that even M. Chaix feels this to be a bit severe, for he follows by listing the stations where pillows and blankets may be rented by those who find themselves compelled to make overnight journeys not contemplated four days in advance.

If anything goes wrong in your travels, you mustn't blame M. Chaix, for he has told you everything, even down to listing the stations where only passengers without baggages and "dogs with companions" are allowed to board the train. Moreover he urges you not to be content with his work, but to inform yourself further at the office in the Hall of the Lost Feet at the St. Lazare station. Sometimes you feel he is a bit of a dreamer, as when he insists that two children under seven should not occupy more than the space of one adult passenger; sometimes even one suspects him of a gruesome humour, as when he says that a voyager may "renounce an unaccomplished trajet" by leaving the train before his destination, provided he also renounces, for the benefit of the administration, the full fare paid for the "uneffectuated totality." Yet certainly he discourages this wanton behaviour, and urges his congregation to be sure that they are not paying more than the stipulated 0.4612 per kilometer for first class, 0.3213 for second, 0.2024 for third.

But I perceive, regretfully, that I haven't given you

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any notion of the special delightfulness of M. Chaix. His little time-tables are like any other great charms of life, you have to come upon them for yourself. The real fun of M. Chaix is when you take him from your pocket, in some little provincial train, and with one eye on the scenery and one eye on his tables, begin to figure out your next change. You look for the station marked *B* that means a *buffet* or the *b* that means a *buvette*; you see that the train will wait 30 minutes because it is market day at Paimpol; and that Savigny is a "facultative arrest." Or you may idle over even more exciting sections: how, by writing to Mr. G. S. Szlumper, director of Maritime Services, berths may be had in turbine packetboats between Cherbourg and Southampton; or of return tickets valid from Fat Thursday until Wednesday of the Cinders. For once you learn, with M. Chaix, how easy it really is to travel, you wonder if some day you may not even graduate into his Supreme Work, *The Indicator*—which includes the Grand European Trains Express. In that noble compilation you can work out your "trajects"—not merely in France, but to Rome and Vienna and Petrograd and Constantinople. But for the moment this must be our Facultative Arrest.



A PARIS CROWD

ONE of the delights is that you know no one and no one knows you. That free and solitary passage among multitudes can never quite be attained at home; perhaps only in a foreign city where different language and different aspect of things turn the mind in upon itself for its needed reassurance and composure. There is something divine in the sensation of your secret swim through this human ocean. You carry your own heavy and fragile burden of hopes, anxieties, joys, remorse, and you know that you will not, from *café crème* at breakfast to *café cognac* at midnight, encounter any one who has the faintest concern to share or jostle that curious load. So must the gods have walked among men. And you marvel at those voyagers who hasten to inscribe themselves in the register at the American Express office, to have their names and hotels chronicled by the *Herald*—in short, who so

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readily abandon that most rare and refined of human pleasures, the perfect incognito.

Perhaps the most thrilling crowd in Paris is the crowd in *Père Lachaise*—the crowd of the dead. I wanted specially to see again the monument Aux Morts in its little green ravine. There were some particular graves I should have liked to see, too; but I felt it would be the depth of bad manners to go hunting them out with the aid of a plan. In that perfect democracy of silence only the vulgarest of snobs would be picking and choosing, looking for “famous” tombs. It was a grey drizzling day, the stone-ranked hill was very solitary, and I strolled at random, content (so I found myself rather gruesomely putting it) with the monuments I happened to pass. I will be honest: I had a faint velleity to see the grave of Oscar O’Flaherty Fin-galls Wills Wilde (I believe he is buried there) because any man devoted to publishing has a natural interest in the writer who has caused more bogus *de luxe* sets than any other (except perhaps Maupassant?). I wanted to see if the Epstein sphinx which once caused such a row was finally erected. But I didn’t find it; and was more than compensated by discovering the tall shaft that the City of Paris has put in memory of her municipal workmen—pipe layers, car conductors, electricians, and others—who have lost their lives in the course of duty.

I don’t know (perhaps Sir Thomas Browne or Lord Bacon were the only prowlers who have known) exactly what one feels among these crumbings of mortality. What is our æsthetic of the dust? Is it a small

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and shamed superiority, to be still topside the gravel? or is it even more disgusting self-pity? At any rate, that noble Aux Morts, unspeakably beautiful tableau of human grief and courage, sends one away with the thoughts "of things that thoughts but tenderly touch." What a thrilling suggestion it gives of our poor final dignity. You see the dying as they approach the end: they come crouching, haggard, stooped in weakness and fear; but at the sill they straighten, shakingly brave, to face that shut door. The man, more sullen or more fearful, still hangs his head. But the woman's face is lifted, and her hand is gently on his shoulder.

If one tries to be honest, he has to be cautious to note where genteel sentiment begins to slide into mere self-concern. After an hour or so of rambling, Père Lachaise begins to weigh on the mind, and crush the purest æsthetic. You are no longer, as the excellent phrase is, disinterested. That congregated mob of the dead is jumbled in an order as rigorously fantastic as names in an index. (Why should the man who invented gas-lighting have so much smaller a tomb than Napoleon's generals who adjoin him? But come to think of it, perhaps his real monument is in Lamb's essays.) You begin to feel an uneasiness, and speculate on the words *Concession à Perpétuité* cut in so many stones. Yes, you say, we must all concede to Perpetuity; but in the meantime, where shall we have lunch? If you feel the pricklings of self-pity, I think it sanative to pause on your way out to look at the grave of de Musset, the enchanting poet and wit who was so gorgeously sorry for himself. He asked to have a

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commiserating willow over his tomb; and I noticed that the growth of the tree has made it necessary to cut away part of the stone, removing one of his own poems that he wanted engraved there. There is a kind of hint in this. More loyal than the willow, his dear old sister sits chaired in stone just behind him, faithfully holding a volume of his poems in her lap.

The preceding paragraphs were written three weeks ago, and have been lying here on the table. If the two merry little chambermaids of the Hotel G—— could read English—as I know they can't—I wonder what they would make of them? But perhaps chambermaids in the Latin Quarter are too sagacious to ratiocinate about the guests. They sit in their little pantry at the foot of the stairs and chirp like canaries; and when you come in, both run out (some day some social scientist will explain why French chambermaids always move in pairs), exclaiming excitedly that there was a telephone call from "The Lady at the Ritz." I wish that the best of life were not so inenarrably humorous! I should like to tell you how two telephone calls (you must take my word for it that the incident was excellently innocent) vastly improved my status at the tiny Hotel G——.

But I'm glad the earlier sheets lay unmailed, because my notes on the sense of secret solitude in Paris require supplement. They were written when my wandering had been done mostly in the old streets of the Left Side. I have learned since, pleasantly enough, that along the Avenue de l'Opéra or the Rue de Rivoli one is certain to encounter friends from home. That peculiarly in-

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timate feeling of utter anonymity is very real and precious, but like all human sensations it quickly passes into a new phase. Apart from the chance tangency with friends, whom one may welcome either for merri-ment or for advice, it is remarkable how quickly the transplanted life puts out its new fibres, makes its unconscious adhesions, begins to think of the old women in the newspaper-kiosk or the man behind the coffee-bar as its natural associates. It is not far wrong to say that two of the most amazing phenomena in Paris are the number of Americans in the region of the Opera, and the number of Chinamen along the Boule' Mich'. For the latter phenomenon I have no explanation, unless they have fled the chop suey restaurants of Upper Broadway. My friend the Old Mandarin (who is here, too) notes that these young Celestials wear the biggest and broadest-brimmed of the black hats, that they talk French fluently, and are greatly esteemed by the girls of the Latin Quarter. Certainly there are enough handsome women in the world to go round, and I am the last to complain: yet some faint residual shred of race instinct causes me a mild surprise when I see a merry young Chinaman with a smart French damsel on each arm. Coming from America, the land of vehement taboos, one is greatly struck by the Parisian freedom from the cruder forms of prejudice. They really seem to dislike no one but their own politicians.

But it is a city, I still feel, uneasy in its inward heart. The statue of the boy offering masks for sale, in the Luxembourg Gardens, is rather symbolic. In his

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string of faces there is not one that is tragic. Doesn't that contradict your notion, a friend says, that Paris is anxious inside?

I don't think so. What is the purpose of a laughing mask?



BUSSES AND TRAMS

I'VE been cleaning out my pockets, and have thrown away a large collection of the little coloured slips they give you on the busses and trams. The first week I was in Paris I was too timid to go anywhere except in taxis. After that I was more timid still. I understand perfectly how the Marne was won by Paris taxicabs: they have more *élan* than any other vehicles in the world. This last fortnight I've travelled widely in the busses and trolleys, and after a good deal of bashful experiment I've learned their great secret. It happened that every day for two weeks I had to go out to the leafy suburb of Neuilly, where men sit along the river fishing for sardines. The French passion for angling for very small fish is necessitated, I dare say, by the constant demand for *hors d'œuvres*. Every morning I took the same bus at the same corner; to be sure of doing nothing wrong I always sat in the same

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seat and got off at the same place. Yet, always asking the conductor how much I should pay, the fare varied daily. Sometimes as low as sixty centimes, sometimes it ran up to ninety, and oscillated among all the sous between. It was as exciting as following the variations of the franc. Then I learned the etiquette. The conductor takes whatever sum you give him and is content. I struck an average between high and low for the ride from the Panthéon to Champerret. Seventy-five centimes, I concluded, was par. Now I give that amount to the conductor and he seems perfectly happy.

In the trams the same method works. But the problem is even more complicated there, because there are more compartments in which you can ride, and they give you a large assortment of coloured slips. If you want to stand in the middle of the car, where you can smoke, you must be specially careful. When the place gets crowded, and (trying to be polite) you shove over a bit to give someone more room, you may be pursued by the conductor, who will ask you for another sou and hand you a little ticket—"Supplement for a Voyager Who Has Transferred Himself from Second Class to First." One day I incautiously allowed myself to get manœuvred on to the front platform, near the motor-man. It was delightful, I smoked and enjoyed the ride; but meanwhile the car had filled up behind me. I saw my destination approaching and began to work my way back toward the only exit, at the rear. But to do so I had to pass through various sections, and in each one someone took away a sou for transferring myself from one class to another.

Busses and Trams

I find it harder and harder to know where literature ends and life begins. There was a very interesting remark in an article on Conrad in the *Journal des Débats* the other day; an article by Joseph Aynard, one of the most penetrating comments on Conrad's work that I have seen. "The more a writer has lived," said M. Aynard, "the more his experience has been enriched, provided only that he has not written too much. For experience itself may be deformed by the desire to write about it." But to keep in touch with *belles lettres* I will say that on tram 35 I saw a man reading Frederick Niven's "Justice of the Peace." I was eager to speak to him and tell him I am a faithful adherent of that fine novel; but I reflected that I had no right to alarm him with my private and irrelevant excitements. I followed him half way round the Madeleine, as a kind of tribute, trying to make up my mind as to his nationality. He looked like a Frenchman who had had a Scotch grandmother; he had a little ribbon decoration in his lapel.

Riding in busses and trams does at any rate give one a great deal of the raw material of literature. Literature I once tried to define for myself as an attempt to make life stand still long enough to be looked at. But life must be looked at without its knowing it is being looked at; and the only way to make it seem to stand still is to travel at exactly the same pace it is travelling. I believe that in the trams, where I have seen women suckling babies and young girls promptly giving up their seats to *mutilés de la guerre*, one may pass a little more truly into the bloodstream of Paris than by sitting

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on a cane chair, with an *apéritif* and a blue syphon, dreaming at the pavement. Besides, those silvered globes that hold the napkins are too hypnotic, they put you into a trance. There is a jovial story—perhaps it hasn't been written yet—of an American who pursued a rum omelet round the restaurants of Paris. He had somehow heard of this noble dish and had imagined it as the final blaze and brightness in the realm of food: a confection of whipped phoenix eggs bathed in blue flame. But perhaps because his accent was gross, perhaps because he only knew of the thing as "burning eggs," he never could get it. When he asked for it his waiter would call the head waiter, the head waiter would call the *patron*, and they would confer in perplexity with the woman in the *caisse*. Eventually they would bring him a ham sandwich. But one night, at a restaurant by the Chatelet, the *garçon* understood him. The burning omelet was brought, and he singed his moustache in his haste. But instead of the light and tingling texture he had imagined, a dish combining heat and sweetness and savoury nourishment, the expiring flame yawned over a sort of eau-de-cologne syrup, and the yellow mass underneath was cool and fleshy. The only part of the omelet that was really valuable was the allegory; which he afterward pondered as he used to sit at supper in the little Place de la Sorbonne.

Riding in busses and trams is a part of that immensely valuable process of learning the mechanics of a civilization. The great people of the earth don't have to worry about these things, their credit is good anywhere, taxis and couriers and housekeepers are always waiting. But

Busses and Trams

the little people have to study the details. How to get a good meal *à prix fixe*, how to move promptly and cheaply from one point to another, how to mail a *pneumatique*, how to get two seats next the windows in a second-class compartment, how to get a check cashed, how to take a bath in a small hotel where there's only one bathroom (and if you slip into the bath without warning any one the pretty chambermaid comes pounding on the door with unintelligible and most irregular verbs)—these exhilarating minutiae are a lively part of the huge comedy. Riding on the back platform of a bus you have gorgeous opportunity for study. You see, in the names of streets and shops, how deeply a sense of fancy—a literary sense, if you like—is ingrained in French character. Think of a tiny toy store called *Aux Délices de l'Age d'Or*; or of the Street of the Frankly Bourgeois, or the Street of the Bad Boys. You see those quaint reverses and reciprocations by which one civilization doffs its hat to another: what *we* call (on Amsterdam Avenue) a French laundry is here, always, an American laundry; and goldenrod is sold on the streets as a rare and precious bloom. One thing, however, no one can learn: why do they mark the doors of bookshops *Entrée Libre*? Are there any bookstores that charge admission?

Even if there were, I fear I should be among the patrons. My dream of adventure would be to go into the shop of the Presses Universitaires, on the Boule' Mich', with an empty suitcase and a bundle of the crisp blue and yellow hundred-franc notes; to fill the bag with new, ink-smelling paper-bound books; hop a taxi for

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(say) the Gare de Lyon, and in a first-class padded compartment (so like a padded cell) ride all day toward Marseilles or Geneva, reading and wondering. One of the first books I should choose would be one they have in the window—"Esquisse d'Une Philosophie de la Dignité Humaine," written by a Belgian professor. A day so spent would produce madness, but it would be a noble end. But the publishers have added a new terror to death. Nowadays, after an author dies, they hire someone to carry on his characters through new books. They have done that with Pollyanna.

It is chiefly in the emergencies of life that you discover what literature is really most helpful. Suppose you are reading to someone in a hospital, would you choose "Ulysses"? I doubt it. I want to pay a word of tribute, years overdue, to a great master of fiction who has never been touted by the Intellectuals; who is certainly as great a magician of pure plot as O. Henry, and whose humour is less marred by temporary and local allusion. Other writers, no greater, have been reissued in *de luxe* editions with resounding prefaces. When will some publisher do what should be done for W. W. Jacobs? I am interested to see they are beginning to translate him into French.



JULIE

THIS is Julie's afternoon off. At three o'clock the old coachman, with curly white moustaches, clicks the latch of the garden gate. Julie is ready, in her best black apron and the black felt slippers. Her mysterious little packages, treasures accumulated during the past four weeks, are handed up to Monsieur Lecellier with the warning that they are *bien fragiles*. A hat that Titania has given her; some bits of barley sugar and a baby's dress—for the children of her six nephews who own a fishing smack in common; the chintz-covered bottom of a broken trunk tray that has greatly taken her fancy, and the elephant teapot (with his trunk for spout) that Monsieur and Madame brought her from Paris. These, and other small increments, she asks me to inspect, so that I may be assured nothing is

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exported that does not belong to her. I have tried to persuade Julie it is not necessary to ask our permission every time she wants to eat anything. Accustomed to the manners of American servants, the first time Julie asked if I would permit her to take "a morsel of bread with some butter," I thought it was irony. But far from it. Julie cannot eat or drink with relish until she has had specific assent from above for every item. She used to bring her plate into the dining room, asking me to put her food on it for her. But I suppose we have debauched her by our constant cry, "*Toujours, Julie, vous prendrez tout ce qu'il vous faut.*"

The hat that Julie is taking with her will go, presumably, to one of her grand-nieces; for Julie, when she wears anything on her head, carries the white linen coiffe of the region. The elephant teapot, I surmise, will lead a carefully guarded life. "*Voici, Julie,*" said Monsieur and Madame, "*c'est un peu symbolique, cela servira pour vous faire penser de la famille américaine qui était comme un éléphant sur vos mains.*" But it is always dangerous to touch the sentimental note with Julie, to hint at possible partings. With sudden wetness in her fierce blue eyes she vows that she would not dream of *using* her elephant teapot. "It's sacred," she says. "It's going in a little corner that I know of." To ease the moment one has rapid recourse to stratagem. "*Dans les soirs d'hiver, Julie, vous pourrez prendre votre tilleul dans l'éléphant.*" Julie knows that when *tilleul* is mentioned it is the signal for a laugh. *Tilleul*, a kind of tea made of lime leaves, is her favourite infusion. It smells and tastes like a fragrant hay-

Julie

loft in summer, and she recommends it for every bodily weakness. Monsieur, however, mocks himself of it. Never mind, she says; in fifteen years you will be glad to have recourse to that good *tilleul*.

She climbs into the carriage, gasping a little as she balances on one foot, and drives proudly away to town, to see her two older sisters and tell the latest news of her strange American *patrons*. Only once a month can Julie be persuaded to take a couple of hours off, and then chiefly because she has to visit her *propriétaire*, to pay the rent of "the little corner she knows of." Her wages mustn't be given her until she is all ready to embark; she might lose them. The small black purse is firmly gripped in that strong, laborious hand. Her fine golden-gray head is grandly erect as Monsieur Lecellier drives to town. Life is rich in comely humours, and it happens that Lecellier is her next-door neighbour in the Rue St. Jean. And to be driven up that cobbled lane, arriving in triumph with her bundles, must be good medicine for many days of distress in a long, hard life. What fun it would be, did manners permit, to follow her and see exactly what happens.

In two hours Julie will be back, and come hurrying over to the nearby *chaumière* (forgetting, in her innocent eagerness, that it is forbidden ground: *c'est là que Monsieur écrit son livre*). She is anxious to see if Monsieur and Madame are still alive and well after two dangerous hours unmastiffed; and to report that her sister has sent a present of three pots of jelly. "*Ce pauvre Monsieur! Il n'a jamais assez de confiture.*"

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How can I tell you about Julie? It cannot be done. But since we live by attempting the impossible, I can take a few symptoms of her vivid human decency. Where shall we begin, then? At the very bottom, with her feet.

It is the sound of those valiant feet, their busy shuffle to and fro, that I think of most affectionately. Toward the middle of the afternoon, when the white canvas sandals are discarded for the soft felt slippers, Julie's feet begin to play an important part in the household. An occasional groan is heard. Then it is not amiss to suggest: Julie, you had better repose yourself a few minutes and drink a little *tilleul*. This has to be said rapidly, round the corner of the door, or Julie may want to show them to you. Once I didn't get away fast enough (it is amazing how rapidly she can get started on a conversation) and there they were. "*Ce sont bien propres*," she exclaimed; and indeed they were like ivory. How that does good, she rejoiced, treading them about on the cold stone flags. When one has sixty-four (years, she means) one has *mal aux pieds*. But unless you daily suggest it, Julie will not repose herself even for five minutes. From before six in the morning until after ten at night, those faithful members are on the go. Perhaps it is along the garden paths, where her fury of washing covers every rosebush with blanching linen; perhaps it is on the road to the farm round the corner, where on muddy days her sabots go clopping for eggs and milk.

Let's try the other end of the picture. Julie is a champion talker. She loves noise. Doors close like

Julie

artillery; plates come down on the table with a crash. Anything done silently rather frightens her: if you open the kitchen door without preliminary voice or footfall, she whoops with alarm. When our tiny *salle à manger* is packed for *déjeuner*—Monsieur and Madame, three children and Mademoiselle—the din is unbelievable. Every dish is placed with commentary and suggestion. Sometimes Julie tries heroically to restrain herself, for occasionally she has a faint surmise that Madame would relish a little less clamour; but then she hears something said (in our atrocious French) that interests her. She puts her adorable old head on one side, lays a finger against her nose, and waits—with all the excitement of a pleading dog—to catch my eye. This rogueish gesture is irresistible. I look up (if I didn't she would leave the room in tears) and she begins to volley foghorns of talk. At last Titania finds an opportunity to ask for the spoons. “*Ah, je vous fais mal de service!*” the good creature exclaims, conscience-smitten. We all hold our breaths, thinking now we are settled for a moment. But the Urchiness takes this opportunity to try a few words of French, and Julie bursts into a shout of applause. “*Ah, qu'elle est jolie, ma petite cocotte adorée, ah qu'elle est mignonne!*” Titania knows, wisely enough, that Julie is not one of those who can be compressed into the rigid mould of conventional domestic service. I only wish it were possible, without offence, to reproduce some of her more excellent ejaculations—on the virtues of stewed figs or (anatomically gestured, on her own person) the dangers of bicycle riding.

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How happy an artist would be if he could get Julie on canvas. He'd have to do it while she's shelling the beans outside the kitchen door, almost the only time she could hold a pose. Though I'd like to have her as she's vigorously swinging the lettuce in a little wire basket, shaking the water from the leaves. Her handsome blonde head is bent forward, her strong white forearms flash in the sunlight, she rocks a little on her big haunches. I hope I haven't given an impression of a humble, respectful creature: Julie is a true Norman sea wife, with the stubborn pride and thrift of a rocky coast and the sea wife's horror of storms. "*Fermez bien les portes,*" is her last cry every night as she toils up to the attic. "*Nous aurons du vent. Un triste temps!*" In spite of her horror of frogs (they come hopping into the house every evening, from the garden) she will go out to pick pears in the dark and sit late to cook them, having heard a chance remark that stewed pears would be nice for breakfast. Her merciless tirade can be heard a hundred yards down the road if she imagines that the *épicier* has not given Madame his best and at the lowest price. Yet a word of reproach can fill her with black despair. She is one of those who will suffer anything for love but not raise a hand for coercion.

One who has always known England much better than France finds it specially interesting to see these Norman types so akin to the English in form and spirit. In the very look of their villages one seems to see the knotty cradle from which so much of England sprang.



PETITES ANNONCES

THERE is inexhaustible fascination in standing in the corridor of a French *rapide*. The railing is exactly the right height to receive one's elbows, the wide windows give a full view, no official ever dreams of enforcing the notice that "*MM. les Voyageurs* are insistently besought not to sojourn in the aisle." So one can smoke and ponder, not much disturbed until the little waitress with smartly rouged cheeks comes tingling the bell for luncheon, and starts a file of customers along the narrow passage.

And what a serene pattern of landscape. The fields are striped in silver, green, lemon-yellow or a dull glowing gold in sudden shots of sun; and these various oblongs are stitched together with hedges that seem (as swift movement rocks you into a watchful doze) to hold the whole world together in a mesh. Sprinkles of poppies, stubble combed and trimmed, lines of

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poplars by slow rivers, tawny roofs of tile rich in latent colour as a ripe Stilton cheese. They are long, low, stooping roofs, sagged with burden like a donkey's back, but still strong to endure. A woman in a blue dress, bent over her sickle, pauses to watch the train run by.

But the "omnibus" train—or as we would say, accommodation—is even more fun. It is an easy-going caravan; most of the way you are quite likely to have your second-class compartment to yourself; and when lunch time comes you hop out and buy sandwiches, brioches, pears, and a bottle of white wine (with the cork already loosened for you) at a station buffet. I don't quite know how to work Literature into these dispatches: Doctor Canby writes me that I might say something about what people are reading in France: but Literature, at any rate as boiled down and scummed off into little paper bricks, is not much occupying my mind at the moment. If Doctor Canby knew that the Contributing Editor spends his train journeys reading that scurrile journal, *Madame Sans Gêne* (whose short stories are obscene, but as clever as O. Henry for sheer ingenuity), he would certainly dismiss me. But to look at life solely through the refractions of Literature would be as rash as to assess French civilization by the *Petites Annonces* in *Le Sourire*.

Then, when you lay aside your newspapers, and your invaluable Livret-Chaix, you gape out across the wide fields. The russet light of early autumn is on the slopes of stubble, apples are red and heavy in the trees. The

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tan-and-white cows of Normandy, you notice, spend most of their time lying down: exhausted, perhaps, by the continual demand upon them for the "*Véritable Camembert de Normandie*." But the cream-coloured cattle of Burgundy—you can't help remembering Europa and her bull—are on their feet much more. There is the same difference of temper among cathedrals. Chartres is a shrine on tiptoe, leaning and climbing aloft; Bourges is a cathedral sedentary, couched everlastingly upon her restful soil.

In the little train from Dreux to Maintenon, the pane was gone from the tiny window between our compartment and the next. A small boy in the other cell discovered this, and was happy thrusting an umbrella through the aperture. Then I surprised him by blowing a puff of tobacco smoke into *his* compartment. We looked at each other through the hole, and I saw that his sailor cap had a ribbon lettered WILSON. I complimented him on this, told him "*Ça porte bonheur*," and gave him four sous. When he and his mother got off at Ecluzelles, a heavenly hamlet in that Eure valley that is striped so gold and green, he was still talking about it. The *chef de gare* always looks like an admiral in his gold braid. Such a slamming of doors, blowing of whistles, squawking of the absurd departure signal, all the medley of noise, bustle, and miniature importance that the French relish . . . and off we go, *on time*. The fidelity with which even the smallest branch-line trains stick to their schedule puts the Long Island Railroad to shame. They establish a time-table that they know they can keep—and keep it.

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One who loves Long Island, by the way, is very much at home in all that central plain. From Chartres to Châteaudun and Blois, across rich sweeps of earth, I could easily imagine myself humming in *Dame Quickly* from, say, Roslyn to Babylon or Bayshore; though the plains of Eure et Loir are lonelier. The spacious emptiness of French landscape is a constant amazement: every inch in that region is under cultivation, yet one sees few hands at work. A curious echo of home is a line of telegraph that goes humming across the country south of Châteaudun. As soon as you see it you recognize something familiar about the shape of the cross-bars and insulators. Yes, the driver says, it was built by the Americans during the war. It goes to Brest, I suppose, and perhaps the name worn by the urchin of Ecluzelles flashed more than once along those copper threads. Beside the road you pass an occasional patch of our Indian corn—not spaced in hills, but all thickly jumbled together, for fodder, I suppose. Yet at the hotel in Châteaudun—which one is quaintly astounded to find owned and run by an American—you can actually order ears of corn for dinner; and though I am no partisan of American dishes when abroad, I must honestly announce it as thrillingly good. Under the very window where I write, corn is put to still another purpose: it grows in the flower garden, among the gay colours of dahlia and zinnia, as a decorative herb, ornamenting an old château. Just so did Ben Franklin, good solid citizen, find himself an aristocrat when he went abroad.

If you are at Châteaudun, you will rise early and go

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out along the road toward Courtalain; and by the 1-kilometer stone you will see a field crossed by a low stone wall. You cannot mistake this wall, for it sparkles with bits of broken glass in all lively colours: green, blue, lilac, yellow, and brown. Over this wall, beyond a vineyard and a valley, you can get your first profile of an absolutely unspoiled château—not a re-decorated trap for tourists like Blois, for instance, but the genuine majesty and cruelty of the Middle Ages. Happily the castles of the Loire (how can I persuade the printer, at such distance, to spell this Loire differently from the earlier one? He will certainly conclude the calamus has lapsed) have been made such an industry that most travellers are wearied out before they reach Châteaudun; and you can enjoy it in lonely peace. The wise are content to say little of their richest trove: I have already said too much. I will only add, to assure Doctor Canby that I am aware of current literature, that in Châteaudun there is a *coiffeur* called Proust.

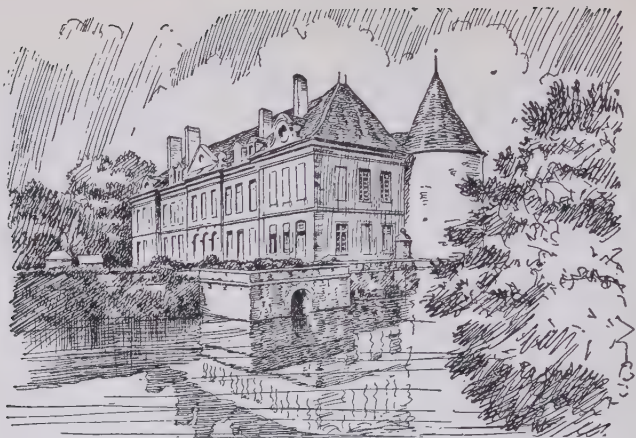
A necessary ingredient of any full experience is terror; I came close to it when M. Battais, one of the caretakers of Chartres cathedral (to whom I had gone provided with secret passwords), instructed me to help him ring the noonday bells. In the roaring cave of that lacy spire, see-sawing on the crossbeam of a bronze monster that seemed as maniac as Victor Hugo's cannon, we sprang and clung. Through the long windows the sunny roofs of Chartres, far below, spun a fantastic rigolo. You grasp an iron bar on the fixed rafter above the great bell. With one foot on the airy scaffold, you put the other on the rocking crossbeam, and begin

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with gently measured shoves. Then, stronger and stronger you bear down, sinking lower each dip as the bronze begins to roll. With a jarring thunder the metal takes voice and comes alive. Farther and farther down you swing, on one foot, until the other leg loses its purchase on the platform. Now, with a wild capering you reel up and down, watching M. Battais in his shirtsleeves and skull cap as he grimly oscillates on the other side. The bell is already making nearly a 180-degree swing; the shaking explosions of sound are bewildering; you begin to wonder if it is his intention to make it go all the way round? For you didn't catch any too clearly just what he had told you, in French, to do next—except to hold on tight. You meditate sadly, as you bound on and off the flying beam, that the spire is centuries old, and that this appalling vibration is enough to burst the silver-grey stones asunder. To-day, to-day evidently, is the final moment when disintegration is due. How startled Titania will be, calmly sitting at the Grand Monarque inn, to hear the crash; and you yourself to be assimilated from fragments of stained glass and lichen. The adorable ironies of life! You came to Chartres, a simple pilgrim, in quest of its solemn peace: and here you ride a mustang bronze, a hundred yards in air, that shouts toward God in a hullabaloo the Seventh Avenue subway never dreamed. Then it is over: you stand wiping your brow among the pinnacles, while M. Battais dislodges a tiny seed pod of yellow gilliflower, growing between the toes of a stone chimera, for you to plant in your garden at home.

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I'm sorry I didn't see M. Battais's dog, with whom and a big revolver he sleeps at night in his tiny bedroom hidden among the carved screenery around the choir. There must be good sleeping in that little cavern, and when there is a moon—or better still, he assured me, a thunderstorm, with flashes of lightning—one can imagine his instants of glamour. There was a creature at the southwest corner of the cathedral, outside, sitting up on his haunches, who looked like a dog, though he had lost his head. Titania believed him to be our old friend Mr. Gissing. If it were so, he might well have lost his head; for I think he would have found the blue he wanted in the west windows at Chartres . . . the colour that embraces everything from a *Petite Annonce* to the Annunciation.



AN OLD HOUSE IN BURGUNDY

BETWEEN two great rivers that run almost parallel but in opposite directions, there are two hill-ranges, the Morvan and the Côte d'Or. Between these hills there is a tranquil region of upland valleys, rich in ruined castles, where the streams are uncertain whether to decant northward to the Seine, or westward to the Loire, or southeast to the Saône. The cider of Normandy, the yellow wine of Anjou, the purple of Burgundy, here balance as ultimate destiny. It is not only the watershed of France, it is the wineshed. But, however geographers may map it, there is no doubt in the region's own sentiment. It looks toward the Mediterranean and the South. When the Reds of Marseilles marched to Paris, they were nowhere more warmly welcomed than at Saulieu. From the vineyard slopes above Beaune, in clearest weather, Mont Blanc can be seen floating in the sky. So they all say,

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at any rate, and so Stendhal and many others have recorded, though it seems astounding: the peak must be 125 miles away. I could only see the pink roads the same dusky pink as the inward staves of a winevat; and the church in Beaune that is the shape of a bottle. For when you cross that ridge of the Côte d'Or and come (through a village called Bouze) down vineyard slopes in a hot September sun, you are among the world's most famous grapes. The rapid opening and closing of the straight vistas between vine-rows, as the car spins by, makes the fields change and shimmer like twinkling silk. As you study the wine card at the inn at Beaune you can meditate those historic names: Volnay, Pommard, Corton, Chambertin, Montrachet, Clos-Vougeot . . . Clos-Vougeot to whom one of Napoleon's commanders made his regiment present arms when they marched by. It was another military man (Camille Rodier's great work on *Le Vin de Bourgogne* tells the story) who always drank his burgundies in a glass cheese-bell. For it is the Burgundian theory that wine should be drunk in a vessel large enough to admit both mouth and nose simultaneously. "*Ce n'est évidemment pas très élégant, mais une nouvelle série d'odeurs perçues par les fosses nasales sera le bénéfice,*" says Camille Rodier. The glasses set out by the inn at Beaune are not quite as wide as cheese-bells, but very nearly. I now understand more clearly how it was that Mr. Hamish Miles three times began a letter to me, a year ago, when staying at Beaune; and three times desisted, overcome with sleep. He finished the letter a month later, in London. It was a powerful

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letter, and concluded by quoting the wine card of the hotel, where you will find written: "*Ce n'est pas à dire que l'amateur de Bourgogne soit toujours un homme supérieur, mais c'est un être essentiellement perfectible. C'est un humaniste, sinon en substance, du moins en puissance, car on remarquera presque toujours chez lui un souci d'élégance dans l'expression de la pensée, un amour des bonnes lettres, de l'éloquence ou des arts.*"

Yet it was not of wine that I intended to write, but of an old house in Burgundy; an old house lying in that valley just west of the Côte d'Or hills, deep-set in such peaceable calm as only an inland valley can give. I should really call it a château, for such it is; but to the usual American connotation that word is too likely to suggest a place fantastically ornate. I would not mar its perfect sober dignity by a misleading word.

It is curious how hard it is in words to convey the simple serenity of that old house, with its cone-topped towers duplicated in the broad still moat. Nervous and apprehensive as we are, there is something guilty in the way we shrink from describing peace. Dignity and serenity are the words, perhaps. In that roomy building of stone floors and great oaken beams life seems to shine as clear, as rich, as strong, as colour through stained glass or through the dark wines of Aloxe and Savigny that ripen in its cellar. In every plain doorway, in every curve of stone stair or twist of ironwork or slope of mossed tile roof, there is the sense of long tranquillity, decent and friendly and kind. But there is something happier there than mere tranquillity: a feeling of renaissance, of convalescence, as of an old

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loveliness that had fallen into misery and decay, and now finds itself in hands that can support and reënliven it. At the back of the fireplaces, when the blaze is going, you can see the emblem of former seigneurs: a right hand, lifted open, palm outward. A Glad Hand, we can call it, emblem of a beautiful name, Suremain de Saiserey, which sounds as though it meant something like A Sure Hand to Hold. But the surest hand may relax when there are no heirs to carry on.

Sometimes Americans seem the appointed lovers and custodians of European secrets: there was some strange blessing at work when (armed only with a postcard photo from which the name had been cut off) my friend the Caliph ferreted out this old house—which the owners were prepared to sell piecemeal and where poultry was kept in cages on the big stone stair. Looking across the moat on moonlit evenings, where the shadow of 13th-century towers lay black-pointed on the meadow, there was no sound except the splash of wakeful carp. Sitting by candlelight to study 18th-century vellum-bound account books (there was a cow-hide trunk full of old records of the house) or hunting up the story of the romantic young poet who loved the château and ran away from home to fight for Poland and died young; or admiring the portrait of the Duchesse de Foix, in a scarlet gown and green-gold mantle, gaily holding a tiny black mask, one knew the old house to be very much alive.

Who shall explain what miracle it is that happens when a man finds just that angle of earth that smiles particularly for him? In the Caliph's face as he

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ponders the stone facets of his moat-balustrade, or the hipped gables of his farm buildings, or the curved steps that lead down to his bowling green, or the arch of his alley of lime trees, I see the look of a man at peace with life. Architect by profession, his two or three months a year in this Burgundian retreat are certainly no mere vacancy, but a devotion to the bottom principles and honours of his art; from which he takes back, to his office in an American city, freshened notions of that marriage of Place and Time that we call architecture. And what delightful ironies in the situation, he chuckles. Is it not amusing, he says, that a Scotch-American Presbyterian, brought up to believe (almost) that Papists have horns and hoofs, finds himself seigneur of a Catholic hamlet, with a chapel in his own grounds and a village church under his windows where he must provide for sixty-some masses a year to be performed for his house's ancestors? How is it, he asks, that he feels more at home here than anywhere else in the world—here where he doesn't even understand their language? Like the wise man he is, he says very little to casual acquaintances at home about the house where the welcoming hand shines on the chimneyback. Evasive magic comes to pass when a man's heart takes root, for a few months a year, in a life that is strangely different from his own and yet also strangely blended. It is no mean lesson to have lived, even for a week only, in that old house. One brings away more than memories of licheny stonework rising from a clear mirror of water: a sense that the art of living has sometimes triumphed (and can again) over muddle and dis-

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traction; that (as the humorous wine card has it) a lover of these things might even be "an essentially perfectible being." It will be pleasant for the Caliph to think sometimes, in the subway, that a cask of Corton 1919 (the same that we sampled, from a silver tasting-cup, in the dark vaults under a Côte d'Or hillside) is ripening all the long winter months in the cellar beneath the château. He carries the meaning and destiny of that old house deep settled in his mind, like a bottle of good wine.

II

The little river Serein (so I learn from Mr. H. Warner Allen's book "The Wines of France") divides the vineyards of Chablis, so that the vintages of that region are classified according to whether they ferment on the right or the left bank. It is the same stream which in its infancy makes a clear ring round this old château, on its way toward the Yonne and the Seine.

It is the Serein that idles gently at the foot of this 13th-century stone tower, where a fire burns behind me, lighting up the open hand cast in the iron chimney-back. Suremain de Flammerans was the name of one of the old seigneurs, and his emblem still shines hospitably behind the flames. This queer old painted room, within walls five feet thick, has been unoccupied for generations. We have sounded all the panellings for secret slides—not successfully, alas; though the house has its mysteries, as you shall see. A room with a stone floor, by the way, is ideal as a study; you can throw your matches and ashes where you please, and brush them into the hearth afterward.

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The little Serein, moving softly in its stony moat, is one of this place's most perfect charms. The wind stirs it in parallel scribbles that move round the walls as softly as unwritten lines of verse drift in a poet's mind. Loitering on the bridge, in a forenoon of Meursault-coloured sunlight, I heard Luther Conradi playing in the music room. The rippling notes came trembling out into the sweet September air: a glorious cascade of trebles, gay and hasty with a downward-running cadence. At once the melody made me think of a little stream slipping and bending on its way; I imagined the Serein and its contributors tinkling down from Burgundian hillsides; and when I asked Conradi what it was, he said Liszt's *Au Bord d'une Source*. A few nights before, he had been playing this composition before going to bed. He woke just before dawn and heard someone in the music room (next his chamber) playing it again. He sat up in 'bed amazed at the charm and sureness of touch; and then, to his astonishment, the music rippled on to a new and singularly beautiful ending, different from the composer's. In the spell of half-sleep he thought it must be a dream, and lay down again. But the next morning two others, sleeping at opposite ends of the house, said they had heard music during the night. I have heard him play that new ending of the piece as he heard it in the darkness; it is quite different from Liszt's and not less beautiful. It has a curious upward striving, as though the rivulet were trying to flow backward to its unvexed origin.

It is the little Serein, bending round the château, that seems the *motif* of whatever secret music lingers

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here in unmeasurable vibrations of air. The circle of water binds it in, sets it delicately apart, isolates it with such careful artifice. A tiny stream, so easily crossed: it is really but a few feet of water but its reflections are so deep! It is a great artist, the Serein: it knows that the way to savour a great silence is to have just a little sound; so at night, through open windows, you can hear it whispering past its overflow; on its way, past meadows and white cattle, toward larger destinies. Here it is like the daily mind of man—shallow itself, but it can mirror the pictures of great things.

Silence is a great part of the life the Serein here encloses. A peacefulness so profound that one wants to retard every slow moment and see it from both sides. Within and without, an old domain like this is a work of art, an art so deeply established that it collaborates with the supreme artfulness of Nature. Nature has the vague impulse, the push; man merely provides the rhyme-scheme, the ABBA. In the oddest variety everything here suggests artistic parables. On a sunny morning the shadow of this tower falls definite and dark across the brown moat. The carp, in a thick cluster, shoal to and fro exactly along the line of that shadow, keeping to the darker side. Is that not art? When the church bell rings, or a clock strikes, it seems always to fall upon the ear exactly at the right moment, at the instant when the apprehensions needed it. The wine stacked in bins in the cellar, to lie there cool and obscure, for years to come—the act of placing it has a ritual gravity. And brought upstairs in its little basket, like a baby in a bassinette, carefully horizontal, a bottle of

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Musigny or Corton-Grancey has the full righteousness of colour, bouquet, and *goût* that make it as perfect in its own realm as an ode by Keats. There is no tariff in these matters. Perfection costs whatever you have to pay for it. Indeed the exhalation rising from a wine like Musigny, the ghost of the grape rising in the clear half-empty crater of those vast goblets, is so divine that it would seem the supreme act of connoisseurship simply to relish it in the nostrils and never taste it at all. Nor is it wise to taste rich Burgundies too continuously; the Subscriber in Waterbury who reproached me for an interest in such matters may console himself with the linguistic reflection that *goût* is easily transformed into gout.

I think I had forgotten to tell you about Burgundian clocks, which are amusing. The nearer one gets to Switzerland, I have always observed, the more people are interested in clocks. Perhaps that is because the Swiss, placed by Nature so near eternity, find earthly divisions of Time all the more precious. America invented the alarm clock, which rouses man to his work, and the time clock which keeps him at it. The Burgundian, taking it for granted that a solid citizen is for a large part of his time engrossed in the distractions of the table, conceived the idea of a clock that would strike the hour twice, to make sure of your noticing it correctly. The first time, while you are toping or gossiping, the clock strikes at random, anything at all, perhaps exactly, perhaps not. But then, a couple of minutes later, when your attention has been called to the fact that another hour has ticked, the number is correctly clanged. Such is a Burgundian clock.

An Old House in Burgundy

But the thought that the Serein and I were pursuing was that everything here seems (as a printer would say) *justified*: aligned and accurately imposed upon some underlying norm. When Conradi was playing the other evening, I sat near to watch his hands: it seemed impossible that they should err. The musician playing a difficult composition, he said, is always singing it in his mind. In the same way, in rare coalitions of circumstance, some subconscious spirit of just and fine living seems to be singing the complicated counterpoint of our existence. With it all, unless I misconceive the spirit of an old house, one is pervaded now and then by a delightful enchanted sadness. But the Serein has its gaieties too; and Conradi and I are meditating a Moating Song—a form of nautical ballad not yet achieved, I think.

Returning to France revives in the poet, who has not written verse for a longish time, an eagerness to put his notions in rhyme. In the train from Granville to Paris, and again from Paris toward Dijon, the measured charm of those countrysides, the reddening orchards, white curly roads, neatly shaven plains and stripy hillsides, silver-grey hamlets and the blue curves of the Yonne and aisles of poplar trees, all seemed to suggest and require the old French forms of verse. In the balade or rondeau the singer spreads his thoughts with the simple orderliness of a peasant sunning linen on a hedge.

And this evening we are going, quixotically, to tilt some Moulin-à-Vent. As one might write on a picture postcard: We are having an uncorking time.



A LETTER TO HENRY

CHESTERTON once said, my dear Henry, that though the British Empire had discovered almost everything else it had never discovered England. Perhaps indeed it is the Americans—some Americans—who are most likely to discover it: for we bring to it so healthy an appetite for just those viands that are the blood and gravy of English feeling. At home, often, our minds are stuffed rather than fed.

You begin to discover England when you get aboard the boat train at the Gare du Nord. Those voices: how adorably indescriptibly odd to the American ear! It is, seemingly, your own tongue, for (to your surprise, after months in France) you find you can understand the fragments you overhear; yet it is said in the most delicious lifting and softness of intonation. As differ-

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ent from our lingo as English grass from American grass. Then, when you go into the wagon restaurant for a cup of tea, you find that the French (with their divine and erring courtesy) have tried to make their guests at home. There are little pots of marmalade on the tables, and platters of what the Company of Wagon-Lits fondly believes to be toast. And even slices of "plum cake." The other day in Paris a pink-cheeked little English flapper sat next to Titania and me at Smith's tea-room, over the bookshop, Rue de Rivoli, and had a thoroughly girlish snack: ice-cream with buttered toast. Then she called for "A slice of plum cake," and I knew that England wasn't far away. The fields of the Somme were won, not on the playgrounds of Eton, but in the tea-rooms of J. Lyons. You've heard of British Lyons. I can't quite make you understand why that pretty child (her name, I think, was Kathleen) asking for "plum cake" was to me a whole essay on European history.

On the deck of the cross-channel steamer *Riviera*, Boulogne to Folkestone. Is there anything more exciting than seeing, from mid-stream, a dark wet night, the lights of France and England simultaneously? All those lighthouses twinkling away like drugstores on both sides of a wide street. France seems to have the best of it: the light at Gris-Nez is brightest of all. "Do you know, sir," said the charmingly polite English passport officer, questioning me in the smokeroom, "you're positively the first American I've ever met without a middle initial." Only the non-British have to be passported on the boat: there were a few French,

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several Americans, and a little Jap giggling to everyone with almost hysterical friendliness. The Englishmen were mostly at the bar, ordering "a small Bass."

What a day, my ancient! At 5:30 of a cold rainy morning, coffee on the far western coast of Normandy. At midday, filet of sole and a bottle of Aloxe-Corton with the Caliph at Marguery's in Paris. Passing through Amiens and Abbéville, that dark devastation which the Wagon-Lits stewards deem tea. In the second-class compartment from Folkestone to Victoria, "a small Bass," while I read in an evening paper, with shame, an American playwright's article explaining why he thinks that a million people should see his play, just opened in London. I had Proust's "Les Plaisirs et les Jours" in my pocket, but I can't read real things while travelling in unfamiliar scenes. I am too nervously and miserably happy. At Victoria I was met by a young kinsman who insisted on coffee and liqueurs. Then the 11:30 train to the moist and fragrant darkness of Surrey. Arriving at Effingham, opposite the Plough Inn there is a little old cottage buried among hollyhocks and cabbages. Lovelace once lived there, they tell me. Beer and books were waiting. How does one sleep, at 1:30 A. M., after a day like that? But I found there the latest issue of the *Saturday Review*, and took it to bed, by candlelight, in a tiny cupboard-bedroom where you lie with your feet almost out of the little leaded window. I was just dozing off when I found that your compositor had turned my "inenarrably" into "inerrantly." This made me so peevish it woke me up again. I had to turn to the

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editorial, dealing, as usual, with the Future of American Literature.

When I woke up, the soft September drizzle was pearling the hollyhocks and cabbages. It's lucky, by the way, that Yorkshire pudding doesn't grow on a bush: one would be given it at every meal. But this was my first morning in England for eleven years, my Henry; and I was going to have bacon and tea. I often wondered why Edna Ferber went out of her way to poop off at English bacon in "So Big." I don't think she knows what she's talking about. Another matter that pleased me, I meant to mention it before, I was reading David Garnett's "Man in the Zoo" in bed in the hotel in Cherbourg, last June, when I found him mentioning "Cooper's Oxford Marmalade." I knew then that it was a good book. Garnett and the Bowling Green, I think, are the only two attempts to get Cooper's Marmalade into literature.

A little later I was in a taxi, on my way to Cavendish Square. I passed some park or other—let's say it was St. James's: I haven't yet recovered my London geography—and something hit me, so hard that I felt ill in my bowels. It was my love for London. I know that good manners impel one to apologize for loving things. What I'm getting at, old magistrate, is this: don't worry too much about the Future of American Literature. It will come along all right, as any kind of art comes along, when we love things enough. Which doesn't mean blurbing about them, but trying to enter into their secret perils and meanings. And as that dear man H. M. Tomlinson says, when you talk to

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him about these matters and his face lights up vaguely and he murmurs the rich prose of his mind in a soft crooning whisper, "My God," he says, "you've had Whitman and Melville and Thoreau and Emily Dickinson. Isn't that enough for a century or so?"

When we love things with the terrible shuddering love of Emily Dickinson for her Amherst garden, for instance, literature happens—or else silence. There are a lot of dangerously smart people turning out the New Palaver on our side, with tongue in both cheeks at once. George Gissing would say that we haven't starved enough. I should say we haven't yearned quite enough.

But London, I repeat (you must allow a little lunacy to one coming back after eleven wild years) makes me wamble with love and terror. Paris, divine though she is, seems to fade out and grow dim. Is it because London is so much less eloquent that she seems to have much more to say? That is literally it; and it is the unsaid things that concern literature. You know the type of Englishman who means most to our hearts: the man with whom it is difficult to communicate, but easy to commune.

And one of the loveliest things about London is, she brings me so much nearer to New York—the only city where I find my own dangerous peace. My heart is blithe to think of our polyglot skyline of insanity. And with all our sins, we have never quite been complacent about her, as some of our friends here are complacent about the London we love as much as they.

All this, you see, has been for me not discovery but

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verification. It is strangely mixed up with thoughts of a man who really did discover England, and as I came through Kent in the dark I thought how much poorer England is since he sailed. Of course, I mean Conrad. It is strange to think of the incredible wealth of that mind, its memories and brooded insights upon men, its nobly just division of love and scorn, its lonely affectionate simpleness, lost to us for always. Even his gravestone, they tell me, carries his Polish name. When the English think about Conrad, it will make them very generous toward "foreigners"—even to Americans, who have not the charm of real foreigners. But they are already more generous to us than we deserve.

I was passing by the Museum Tavern—opposite the British Museum—just as they unbarred the door for the noon opening (it is Sunday). I went in, and drinking a tall one of shandygaff and admiring a pink section of ham and a vast slab of cheese (there's something rather good about ham in Amy Lowell's poem about England) which would have done you good to consider, I pondered how to write to you as you deserve. Don't let the too-easy critics wear out their fingers pointing to the scenery, as the excellent phrase is. Literature comes where and when you're not looking for it. Some day, just as some strange shabby bird is passing by, the pub door of Helicon will be unbarred and a Ganymede in shirtsleeves with foam on his moustache will beckon him in.



REWARDS—AND FAIRIES

THE Manchester *Guardian's* London correspondent tells a story of a young officer commanding a machine-gun outpost. He was cut off from his own lines in one of the German pushes, and the last words that came over the 'phone were: "All done in except the sergeant and me. Four rounds of ammunition left, but the gun's jammed. Don't expect anything showy."

You won't expect anything showy from the Green in regard to its brief adventures in England. Particularly not from this quiet room in King's Bench Walk. I sit in a friend's chambers in the Inner Temple, looking out toward the winged horse on the spire of the Hall. My host himself, one of a family whose genius consists of intuition without exclamation, is a master of shrewd statement—not so much understatement

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as innerstatement. I don't know whether you saw his description (in the *Guardian*) of Conrad's funeral: of the strange feelings caused by the cortège which moved through a town dripping with flags (it was Canterbury's annual festival week) so that the colours J. C. had honoured almost touched the hearse as it passed; and how the coffin was lowered into clean whiteness, the graveyard being on Kentish chalk. Those are the things that my host sees, and sends nightly over the wire to Manchester, to the paper that many of us have always believed one of the few really great journals.

So the courts and buildings of the Temple justly move one toward a decency of thrifty words. There is nothing showy about the stone behind the church with the plain words "Here lies Oliver Goldsmith." The porter with his top hat, the under porter in his brown and yellow robe, are perhaps a little more spectacular, but they have their dignity too. In the building where Lamb was born there is a broken window pane, which report ascribes to some humourist with a pea-shooter who besieged Sinclair Lewis there when Lewis was working on "Martin Arrowsmith." Perhaps the pane has been left unmended as a delicate tribute to American literature. That would be like the Temple's gracious and humorous ways. The only accent of doubt that I have heard was in the gently questioning voice of H. M. T., with whom I went prowling an afternoon. We visited All Hallows, Barking (a church where Mr. Gissing would have gladly been lay reader), and admired the Thames-side pubs

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and warehouses of Wapping and Stepney. We couldn't enter the Turk's Head (run by a Mr. Gulliver) or the Town of Ramsgate or other famous inns, as they are closed in the afternoon; but we poked about the old docks where Conrad used to tie up; and then H. M. T. said suddenly, "What does one of your professors mean when he says Miss So-and-so's books 'reek with cerebation'?"

Perhaps the best thing written about England lately is Karel Capek's delicious series of articles in—yes, again—the *Manchester Guardian*, called "How It Feels to Be in England." Capek, of course, has the advantage of being a real foreigner; what, among us, would be esteemed too lavish sentiment, seems in a foreign voice delightful, subtle naïveté. At any rate, he has put down, and illustrated with quaint drawings, the soft disturbances of his mind, the things we all feel—such as the beauty of London policemen, the honourable silence of club rooms, the domed shrubbiness of English trees, the strongly satisfying bulk of English food. These thrillingly perceptive memoranda of his will surely (I hope) be published in book form, for we cannot have too much of that sort of thing. Most visitors succumb to the comfortable grace of England and accept it; but Capek, with the poet's trouble in his mind, has tried to peer into that grace and see that she is enchanting because she is really bewitched. Here more than anywhere, I suppose, it was really doubtful whether men or fairies should have empire. By this time, some of the elves have been smoked out, yet I saw two goblins last night—two little misshapen

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costers, a man and a woman, dancing in the Strand. The man in his tweed cap, the girl, a lumpish bundle of skirts, footed it on the pavement in a kind of fiercely solemn reel, and no one seemed to pay any heed. And on a dockbridge in Wapping we saw a group of old Jewish women gathered about a still older one who was reading some Oriental scriptures aloud. She droned and keened in a wailing chant, an ecstasy of despair; the others huddled round her and wiped their eyes as they listened. The scene of merriment, the scene of penance, both were invasions from some strange world I have not known and can never know—which is what I mean by fairyland. And why, if not to put the fear of the good old English God into the hearts of the fairies, should the Strand churchbells make strange jangle toward twilight on Sundays? There is no one on Fleet Street then but newspaper men; and newspaper men and elves have much in common. It was a newspaper man who left the back door open (in Kensington Gardens) and allowed so many of the fey people to slip in again.

The emblem of strange magic is upon so many things in England. You go to St. Pancras to take a train for Manchester, and you find a beautiful crimson locomotive on which are painted a thistle, a rose and a dragon's wing. You go sailing on the Thames, in a dinghy, between Chiswick and Barnes, and in the tawny sunsets (sunsets in London, like port wine, are of two kinds: the *tawny* and the *ruby*) a factory chimney is sending up a plume of lavender-coloured smoke. And in Manchester itself, there is a man who polishes

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the brass nameplate of a big clothing store—or should I say a “draper’s shop”? He has moustaches that spike out six inches on each side, gummed and stiffened so that birds could perch on them. He will tell you, if you admire the clothing dummy in the window, that it was modelled after Carpentier, the Frenchman, and cost a hundred guineas. (I wonder if Georges draws a royalty on his effigies that are so popular in shop windows?) And there is the waiter at the Cheshire Cheese, who brings you a platter saying, “This is our lark pie, sir.” On its back in the platter is a bird lying decently stark, its claws curled up and hooked in its beak. It seems a rather large and gaudy lark, you think—a skylark stained by a Wapping sunset, perhaps—and then you see the creature’s dark ink-drop eye ribaldly conning you. It is the Cheese’s famous parrot: he has been there thirty-eight years, and this is one of his tricks. The same fowl, on Armistice Night, roused to frenzy by the celebration, repeated three hundred times his imitation of a cork being pulled, and fell in a swoon.

Of course, I have not proved it (it cannot be proved) but it seems plain to me that in England the fairies put up a grand struggle before they were beaten; and they have left their mark on their conquerors. A man who has fought with them has strange carvings on his face. I saw Dean Inge, for instance, cutting the steak pudding by candlelight, the night the Pudding Season opened at the Cheshire Cheese. He had a delightfully wry smile as the flashlights kept popping off—the Cheese takes good care that these events get into the illus-

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trated papers—as though some Puck was telling him that Doctor Johnson would have been sorry to find the Cheese so keen for publicity. “Ye oldë flashlyghtë and ye oldë electrick fan,” Mr. Muirhead Bone kept humorously exclaiming as he noted these features of the ancient inn.

England expects every American to do his duty: which is to see, and exult in, those miraculous accidents of beauty that have made her life so precious. To read the names and addresses in the visitors’ book at the Cheshire Cheese, will show you how loyally our docible countrymen obey. But often we find the things that are loveliest flashlit by sudden blazes of innocent irony. It is the fairies who do this: it is their last revenge.

Perhaps, after all, they haven’t really been beaten. I saw Sir James Barrie’s windows lighted above Adelphi Terrace last night: how I should have liked to ask *him*. Certainly, twice, riding in taxies, the driver forgot to start his meter until we were halfway there: that never happened to me before, and argues magic. And in Brixton there is a wine merchant (you can verify this in the London ’phone book) whose name is Christopher Morley.



A MAP OF LONDON

I

I'VE just been looking at the map, my precious old map of London which I bought a fine, dark, drizzling evening in November, 1910, at a little shop in Praed Street, near Paddington Station. It's not likely that I shall forget that evening: it was my first foray into London on my own, and perhaps it was all the more cherishable because the liberty was only momentary: for I had to catch the 9:50 back to Oxford—the famous train (if I remember accurately) which was the latest one could take to be back in college before midnight. (Doesn't one still hear those Oxford hansoms jingling through the dark, clashing round the narrow angles of New College Lane?) So I can plainly see Praed Street in foggy darkness, shop windows bright with invitation, and a gigantic commissionaire in uniform outside the door of some music hall or vaudeville theatre (or could

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it have been a movie?). And all these intervening years my map, stoutly backed with muslin and with an ingenious mensurated tape for finding any desired street by an index-number, has been waiting on the bookshelf. It was the first thing I put into my trunk when I came abroad last spring. What fun I would have (I promised myself) re-exploring the scenes of youthful wanders. And then (how delightfully ironical is plain fact) when I actually found myself in London I never had time to open it—except once, hastily, to verify the exact topography of that central trapezoid which is the nub of visitor's London. Oxford Street, Regent Street, Haymarket, Kingsway, and Strand—X'd, like a pair of firemen's suspenders, by Shaftesbury Avenue and Charing Cross Road.

And now, London being again nothing but a dream, I get out the map and mumble a bit to myself over the places I meant to look at and didn't. I find that I can't even remember the meanings of marks I put on it fourteen years ago. I find a black circle round St. Stephen's Square, Bayswater: I savvy that all right, that's where Elmer Keith and I had lodgings at Christmas, 1910, so cold that we slept in swathes of the *Times* (with the *Literary Supplement* as foot-warmers). And I know what this mark means on Guilford Street, W. C., the most momentous address of my life. But what is this carefully inked blob on Lansdowne Crescent? Did anything exciting happen to me there? I haven't the faintest recollection of it.

What I really got out the map for was to see exactly where is Bessborough Gardens, which I meant to visit

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and didn't. In "A Personal Record," I think, Conrad told us that it was there, in lodgings, that his career as a writer began, while he was waiting for the landlady's daughter to clear away the breakfast tray. And I can understand the scene perfectly: for it is after breakfast in London lodgings, after tea and bacon and toast, to be precise, when you are lighting your pipe and warming the slack of your breeks at a minuscule warmth of coals, that one can feel most easily the flowing movement of mind that presages authorship. I hunt out Bessborough Gardens on the map and find it only a little way from the Tate Gallery (where Epstein's bust of Conrad now is) just above Vauxhall Bridge. It is an offshoot of Lupus Street, just the place where a man might begin writing to keep the wolf from the door. Why didn't I have time to see Lupus Street?

Yet certainly I am not going to brood upon things I didn't reach, when I saw so much more than I deserved or expected. I wish I could remember the name of the genial old hotel (was it in the Commercial Road? or perhaps nearer Aldgate?) that H. M. Tomlinson pointed out to me as a traditional resort of sea-captains. For my own part, I discovered what is not too common in Europe, a comfortable little hotel with not a single American in it but myself, nor did I even see the names of any in the register. There was a parson there with gaiters and an apron: he may even have been a Bishop ("solemnly pursuing his bird," if you remember your "Trivia") or he may have been, like the ecclesiast in Elizabeth's "In the Mountains," someone who expected soon to be a Bishop (*"Il n'est pas un évêque mais*

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il est presque un”). When he entered the breakfast room and ordered haddock and grilled kidneys and bacon, and unfolded his *Times* (naturally a solemnifying rite, as it is the Deaths and Marriages that one sees first; and you can’t get to be a Bishop without knowing all sorts of people who are likely to be dead) the scene was as English as Runnymede. For England is different from other countries in that it really is exactly as it has been described. I have only one fraud to report, and that is the “mahogany tree” that Thackeray wrote about—the table in the *Punch* office where the thirteen lucky editors sit down for their weekly staff dinner. The board was already laid, with plenty of wine glasses, when I was there, but Ewan Agnew lifted the cloth—and it isn’t mahogany at all, but a fine old slab of soft deal. If it had been mahogany probably they wouldn’t all have carved their initials in it. W. M. T. and E. V. L. are the best carved monograms in the lot. Mark Twain, I believe, remains the only visitor who has dined with the staff: I wonder if they asked him to cut his initials in the board? Certainly he would have enjoyed doing so. Or perhaps he would have said that two thirds of Thackeray’s would be enough for him.

The pubs, as you probably know, shut down at 10:30 in the evening: one wonders what Doctor Johnson would have thought of being ejected from the Cheshire Cheese at that hour? Along Fleet Street one sees none of the all-night lunchrooms that cheer the heart of the late journalist in American cities. The only recourse at that hour is to climb the stairs to a newspaper

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office where a certain editor sits at his desk eager for colloquy. His stuff has all been put on the wire, but he stays till two o'clock or so in case anything should "break." He has comfortable chairs and he gets out the bottle of Scotch. Then, if there are congenial listeners, you may hear him unfold some of the richness of his alert experience. Robert W. Service happened to be in the other armchair the night I heard the story of the cat. I don't identify the editor himself, for it is his pride that in his twenty years on a famous paper his name has only been printed twice, and then by accident.

He came down from Scotland as a youngster, to look for a newspaper job. He tapped at all the doors and found no entry. His small fund of money soon ran out, and he felt himself beaten. There seemed no room for him on Fleet Street, and one night he wrote home asking for money enough to get back to Scotland. He went to the post office to buy a stamp for the fatal letter. On the counter sat a big black cat, comfortably licking her fur. In an idle moment the young man held out the stamp to see if the cat would moisten it for him. She did so, seeming to relish the sweet taste of the gum. He affixed the stamp and was about to drop the letter down the slit——

Then he put the letter back in his pocket, ran to a desk in the corner and then and there wrote a brief story about the Stamp-Licking Cat at the Fleet Street Post Office. How the postal authorities, always solicitous of the public convenience, had laboriously trained the animal to sit on the counter and lick stamps for customers. How the cat was specially

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nourished with a saliva-stimulating diet, and that a project was under way to mingle a little oil of catnip with the government's stamp-gum. And so on.

The first newspaper editor to whom he offered this agreeably preposterous little yarn accepted it with glee. It was the journalistic *coup* of the week. Illustrated papers wired for photos, and the Post Office was crowded with people asking to see the cat. The S. P. C. A. hurried round to see if it was a matter within their jurisdiction. The sale of stamps at that office increased forty per cent. And the author of the story has never since been without a job. It is the story of Dick Whittington over again, you see. I told you, didn't I, that England is all a kind of fairy tale. It is a different cat that my friend has now in his rooms in the Temple; but also perhaps one with magical powers. For when a Zeppelin dropped a bomb in the neighbouring quadrangle . . . it didn't explode.

The most unconscious pathos that I saw in London was a sign in an Oxford Street clothing shop. RAIN-COATS FOR THE HOLIDAYS. (This, remember, was in summer.) And the most eloquent word was the name of the Air Ministry's building in Kingsway—ADASTRAL HOUSE. Which reminds me again of the journalist mentioned above. When the new Bush Building—a terrific loftiness by London standards—was put up at the foot of Kingsway, there was talk of building some living apartments on the roof, and renting them. Our Scot suggested an advertisement to lure possible tenants. "Yes," he said, quoting Stevenson—"Bed in the Bush with stars to see."

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II

The American's first instinct is that a lively thunderstorm can't be far away. The spires of Wren point strangely pale among the dark jumble of the City, not unlike the white steeples of New England against a coming squall. That soft lilac light, diluted fuscous sunshine (it lies like honey in tranquil Bloomsbury squares) and shadows in a hundred blends and tints, surely they are some barometric omen. He almost pauses to listen, among the steady drum of traffic, for muted jars of thunder. But the air is light and fresh; fragrant, even in October, with almost April sweetness. In the bronzing squares it is a tender country whiff, though spiced always with that faint sharpness of London soot. London smoke, a gladness in the nostril, richest of all fumes to a cognoscenting nose. I recommend the great train-shed of Liverpool Street station at dusk as the perfect place to watch afternoon and evening plight their troth, with Smoke as the officiating spirit. Very sensibly did London choose scarlet as the colour for anything official—uniforms, post-office vans, pillar-boxes. One of our dark green letter boxes would be invisible across a London street. "Bring me my spear! O clouds, unfold! Bring me my Chariot of Fire!" cried William Blake. (We heard the organ at Canterbury Cathedral playing Parry's music for those stanzas the other afternoon—not among the "dark Satanic mills" but in the very heart of "England's green and pleasant land." It was good to hear Blake's great madman's voice exulting in the misty close.)

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The Chariot of Fire, along a twilight street, is a post-office van.

A man who has only a few days in London would be very silly to spend much of his time writing about it. Better, for the moment, just to let the mind touch glancingly upon a few visions that seemed, somehow, of an essence. Getting off the channel-steamer at Dover, there was the engine *Sir Bors de Ganis* waiting to take the boat train to Victoria. Somehow a locomotive so named seemed adequate compensation for not having been able to see the chalk cliffs (the fog was too thick). And the train passed through Tonbridge, where I discerned two stations: one called Tonbridge Tub's Hill, the other Tonbridge Bat and Ball. It seemed a just entry into the land that invented sport.

Our first lunch was at Simpson's, off Cheapside, in the famous old Ordinary where the management tries to divert your mind from the amount of fish and eels you have eaten by offering a free meal if you guess the measurements of the cheese. England is surely the only country where fish is eaten three meals a day and again at supper after the theatre. Some enthusiasts even sally out at five o'clock to have a fried fish with their tea. A good deal of cockney wooing is done over platters of fish: the time, the plaice and the loved one all together. The statue of Britannia should wear a fillet of fish. Another gastronomy quite new to me was lower-case potatoes served in the soup. It was at a dinner where Sir James Barrie was at the board, and the host averred that Barrie had been brought up on potatoes in his soup. We all fell to heartily, hoping

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that the combination might have the same nimbling effect upon our own wits. Then, when the champagne was poured, a wag across the table begged for a potato in his glass. "I was brought up on it," he insisted. Perhaps (it just occurs to me) there is some meaning in the fact that the two greatest essayists England has had were named for food; and the third is half named for drink. All this took place in a room so lined with portraits by Hogarth that occasionally one lifted one's eyes from the table to remember that the painting of (was it?) the Woffington, "dallying and dangerous," was the one that Lamb had described.

The pearly haze that dreams over St. Paul's—the giant gooseberry as James Bone calls it, with the irreverence of a true lover, in his beautiful book "The London Perambulator" —is at least partly the steam of Sausages and Mashed rising from a thousand little taverns approached through narrow passages. There poets sit among barrels meditating their staves. At a few specially favoured places you can precede your sausage with a sublimation of Spain, which cork forests are grown to honour. The most teetotal of wives would hardly reproach her husband if he said he had lunched on Bristol Milk. It is the noblest of sherries. In the Fleet Street aroma there is also, when the breeze sets from Southwark, a rich gust of hops from the warehouses across the river. A blessing on the hop factors; it is their custom that has kept thriving unmarred one of the very last of the old coaching inns, the George in Southwark, only a few steps from the site of Harry Bailly's Tabard. There, in the words of an 18th-century bill still framed

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in the hostess's bar-parlour, customers will find "Beds, wines, spirits and stabling to their perfect satisfaction." The galleries of the inn overlook the yard just as they did when theatrical managers got their first notion from that sort of thing. The site of the Globe playhouse is near by, now built upon by the Barclay and Perkins brewery (a worthy successor; it was that brewery in whose affairs Doctor Johnson was, momentarily, an adviser; his head is still on their bottle-caps). And the Beargarden still runs down toward Bankside. The Three Hours for Lunch Club has established friendly relations with the George of Southwark; and that noble place has already its American reciprocities. Hopkinson Smith did a charming drawing of the coffee room and gave it to Miss Murray, the proprietress; it hangs there, watching the hop merchants playing dominoes after lunch; and on a table in the coffee room I found a much-thumbed copy of O. Henry's "Strictly Business." This was surely a surprise. I pointed it out to H. M. T., who was with us. "O. Henry just about saved some of our lives in the war," he said.

It is amusing to find a tiny Temperance Hotel bravely sandwiched in among the hop-warehouses. And the Club would be remiss if it didn't mention the Riverside Tea Rooms at 49 Bankside, which look cosily out over barges and cranes onto what must be almost the oldest and best view of London, with St. Paul's exactly opposite. It was pleasant to an American eye to find in low-lying Brixton, not far from Little Dorrit's church, the sign *Altitude, Ltd., Steeplejacks*. This was noted on the way to C. Morley and Co., wine merchants.

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Mr. Morley was unfortunately absent, but his affairs were increased by four bottles of moderate port, purchased on the understanding that his first name, as I saw it last year in the telephone book, is Christopher. His assistant believes it to be Charles, but I am still hoping.

Since we've crossed the river to the beginning of the Canterbury trail we may as well go further. Canterbury, of course, is a Pilgrimage; and a pilgrimage is a journey made to some meaning that one feels is greater than one's self. There is a grave in the corner of a quiet, very fragrant ground in Canterbury, where yellow roses are still blooming in October. And there are two people to whom red carnations have a special meaning in London. One of these carnations, worn that day by chance, but crumpled after a long journey, was still in Titania's coat pocket. "Rest after toyle, port after stormy seas," we read on the stone; then, as we turned away, I saw her secretly take the flattened little sweetness from her pocket and put it among the many lovelier flowers on the grave.

James Bone, in that very remarkable book about London, the piety of twenty years' close watching and fine imagining, tells the story of a Cockney in Canada who enlisted for the War. In making out his paper he wrote simply *London* as his birthplace. "London?" said the recruiting officer. "Which London? London, Ontario?" "London, Ontario!" cried the outraged exile. "London, the whole bloody world!"

Yes, that's what it is. To the New Yorker its altitude seems limited; but like the potatoes in Barrie's soup, our hearts were brought up on it long before we were born.



L'HOMME QUI RIT

I HAD felt for a long time that it might happen; now it has. But first I must tell you how time and feeling led up to it. Life is always leading up to things; then—as in this case—you find yourself unprepared, and behave disgracefully.

It is the calm, suspended expectancy of autumn that has something to do with it. Over these coasts there now lingers the yellow quiet of October: as you bicycle softly through villages you smell cider on the air—the air that is so curiously mingled: it feels warm and smells cold; and sliding round a dropping bend you suddenly drift into a whole pool of moist chill. Red and yellow apples are piled in the fields; the eyes of donkeys are more wistful than ever; your wheels pass over little

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prickly mats of flattened chestnut burs—just as they used to in the woods round Haverford, twenty-five years ago, before our chestnut trees all died. Perhaps good American chestnuts, when they die, go to France?

The season of *bains de mer* ended in mid-September, all the visitors are gone, the little town has settled down—after a disastrously wet season—to the long pull through the winter: you see the tradesmen apprehensively getting ready to live on one another. Old Julie, our tumultuous factotum, will shortly go back to her normal life as a fishwife. I wondered why she was so eager to have the Microcosm's baby carriage when we leave. Now the truth is out: she says it will be fine to sell fish in, *pour gagner ma petite vie pendant l'hiver*. But she must be careful to balance the fish in it just right, as we had to the baby, because it's one of those French prams that shut up suddenly into a kind of sandwich.

It's this drowsed and apprehensive sweetness of October that the *bainsdemerists* miss by going back to Paris so early. Perhaps some day you'll go along the hidden leafy road from Donville to Mme. Lebrun-Hecquard's inn A la Rivière at Coudeville; where you can sit at a small yellow table under the passion flower—that strangely Freudian plant—and have whatever *consommation* you prefer. After your port wine (which the French drink *before* dinner, as a kind of cocktail, and very sensible, too), Madame having lit the fire in the little sitting room, you can tackle chicken *en cocotte* bathed in a noble gravy, and an omelet that has somehow inherited just a faint tingle of onion:

L'Homme Qui Rit

nothing so gross as the pearly bulb itself but the misted maiden tears of a young female onion in distress. It was there, with a bottle of *vin d'Anjou*, that we sat with a poet and his wife and after deploring the lack of reticence in the passion flower, fell upon a discussion of the private life of the Russian aristocracy. We knew a good deal about this, as one of us had employed a governess who had once worked for a Russian grandee: we concluded (about the time the *vin d'Anjou* was finished) that the Russian nobility had led the lives of passion flowers; but that the real reason for their goings-on was that they were a hot-climate race compelled to live in a cold country, and that this had made them mad.

It was when I went back to Madame Hecquard's, some time later, to retrieve my walking stick which I had left there that evening, also a notebook full of memoranda about some phantoms in a book that doesn't get written very fast, that I specially remarked this October vacancy and air of attendance. It is a sober landscape: no flame colours as at home, just a gentle subsidence into pale brown and saffron. But the violets are still in flower, and roses, and big cider casks, stoppered with a twist of straw, creak along the way. Or on these clear nights, on the grass-topped cliffs over the sea, the world is so still that one thinks one might almost arrive at some conclusion and yet turns uneasily away from that lucid sky because of its exquisite lack of meaning. A candy-peel slice of moon drifts down toward the rocks of Chausey, there is the heavy rattling crumble of high tide

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on the stony strip of upper beach, a mild air with strong grassy sweetness. How (one wonders) did we happen upon this one stretch of uplifted lonely pasture, spread superstitious above sea and bare to the night—just the field that one's mind required? Some day—and as an honorary member of the *Syndicat d'Initiative* of Donville-les-Bains I suppose I should relish the idea—some day people will build upon that field and even imagine they own it: but some of it will be mine, and I and my phantoms will walk there unawares.

Now I am beginning to approach the matter. The soft and ripened solemnities of autumn, the long serenity of lonely sands, these tickled by the jovial absurdities of bilingual ménage, all had long put me in dangerous disequilibrium. That afternoon, it appears, Julie had groaned more than usual. These groans—which are not the expression of any undue torsion of withers, but a combined whistle, sigh, grunt, pant, and hallelujah, accompanied by a roaring sneeze and a gargling of the glottis, are Julie's way of letting the household know that she is on the job. For, if by hazard as much as fifteen minutes have passed without Julie's having an opportunity to talk to someone, she begins to be doubtful of her own existence: she needs reassurance.

I asked the Urchin—who finds Julie a phenomenon as amazingly fascinating as a rainbow or a French locomotive—what Julie was groaning so much about. That's not groaning, he said, she's saying her prayers. I said that I did not think those emanations were exactly prayers, they seemed to me too vehement.

L'Homme Qui Rit

Oh, yes, they are her prayers, he insisted; she always says something about Jesus after each one.

—You don't know nearly all the funny things that go on in this house, he said presently.

—I'm glad I don't, I said sternly; I know quite enough; it's difficult not to laugh as it is.

—Julie, I said, you had better repose yourself a few moments and take a glass of wine.

—Monsieur, she replied, there isn't any more red wine. (I began to see why the specially rich wave-length of the groans.)

—Eh, well, Julie, take some of the white.

—Monsieur, the white wine takes me with strange drollery in the stomach.

A little later Julie returned to the matter of the small enamel coffee-pot which I bought for five francs and on which her heart is set.

—It is only six days from now, Monsieur, that you will call for your good little coffee and there will be no Julie to bring it all hot.

—Julie, I reply, you are managing my weaknesses; I implore you not to agitate me.

—You will think then, Monsieur, in America, of that poor maiden who will be under the earth for all you know, the poor maiden to whom you gave this jolly small coffee-pot as a souvenir.

—But, Julie, if I give you that coffee-pot (the old rascal has had a carriage load of things given her already) what shall I have as a souvenir of *you*?

More groans in the kitchen, later. This is because Julie knows that to-night we are going over the proprie-

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tor's inventory, and the fact that she has broken eight out of the ten coffee-cups will presently be discussed.

She begs us not to put the new ones, just bought for replacement, "in circulation" before we go. "I have," she truly says, "a very *maladroit* hand with cups."

But it was at the dinner table that it happened.

—Julie, these sardines are very good. I've left some for you.

—Monsieur, I adore them. But I can't take any: they lie at the bottom of my stomach for three days.

I could see them lying there; but I got by this corner safely. Then, forgetting she was not in the kitchen, Julie let off another groan. The tiny *salle à manger* vibrated.

—Julie, you groan much this evening.

—Sir, it is my unhappy feet. I have no blemish nowhere (she runs a patting hand over the superb *rondures* of her person) save in my feet. *Ils gonflent*.

It began to come. I couldn't help it. But she misunderstood my preliminary agitations.

Oui Monsieur, ils gonflent comme ça. And she seized the end of the bread-loaf to illustrate the size of those members when they *gonflent*.

It came. I laughed. I roared, I rocked, I cackled and wept and shook. The long restraint of months was broken, all Julie's adorable and maddening ways broke like surf on the pebbles of my mind, I caved in. I laughed . . . I laughed as a man laughs when he reads "L'Ile des Pingouins." How long is it since I have laughed like that?—Not since the *Saturday Review* was founded.



CURE OF SOULS

I. SAXONIA

I SAT down one evening, in the smokeroom of the *Saxonia*, with a sandwich and a glass of toddy, to write in my diary. How pleasant it would be (I thought) to begin with the address 47° N, 36° W. But steamship smokerooms aren't what they were in the first chapter of "Captains Courageous." (Did you ever wonder why the illustrator of that book drew a picture of an Atlantic liner steaming through a Grand Banks fog *with all her flags up?*) Just behind me a lady was talking about Henry James. In another corner a lady was winning a game of poker. On the thwartship settee more ladies, in shimmering gowns and long knee-crossed slopes of pale silk stocking, were

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listening partly to a garrulous gentleman who said he was writing a book about God and partly to another who was narrating how in Dayton, Ohio, the inscrutable brightness of Pelmanism shone round about him and strengthened him to put over a big proposition upon a group of important customers. "A man will be what he wills to be," he concluded.

Born eavesdropper, I was not strong enough to occlude these agreeable distractions. Besides, I was merely jotting down, for my own pleasure, random attempts to define a work of art. "A work of art," I wrote, "is something composed in proportion; but which also reminds us of the uncomposable disproportion between the universe and the artist."—"A work of art" (I tried again) "is something which by the subtlety of its imperfection suggests the completeness we can never grasp." These absurdities, which gave me mild pleasure to consider, were probably the effect of reading Anatole France's delightful "*Jardin d'Epicure*"; for I am rational enough, in my proper senses, to know that a work of art needs no definition. If M. France had been in the smokeroom (I reflected) he would hardly have been idling over a solitary notebook and a hot Scotch. He would have been talking to the dark girl over there—the only one in the room whose voice was inaudible and stockings invisible. Or would he have been pondering the notice warning one against professional gamblers? How delightful an advertisement, I used to think: tantamount to warning us against the whole human race.

But the restless indolence of the sea was upon me:

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even the bland, phosphorescent ironies of M. France were beginning to seem faintly sterile. I went to walk on deck: one of those long, vacant, hypnotic prowls that can only be taken, on shipboard, late at night. For during daytime there is a tacit agreement among passengers that no one must look at the sea. If you halt by the rail a moment to make friends with Space, someone is told off to Start a Conversation. Steamship companies, I believe, award promotion to their delightful pursers according to the number of social events—tennis tournaments, fancy-dress parties, dances, concerts—arranged to avert people's minds from that embarrassing reality, the Sea. The only time I actually saw a latitude crossing a longitude, in a star-shaped bubble of foam, I was called away to consider the problem of what ought to be done about taking up a collection for the orchestra. On the modern liner there is a deck for every amusement except thinking.

The beauty of the old *Saxonia* was that she isn't modern. How glad I was we had resisted a friend's temptation to come home in the *Berengaria*. The first moment we climbed into *Saxonia's* bowels, from the Cherbourg tender, wandering darkly through storerooms and holds and galleys and engine quarters until we reached the white cabin passages, I knew her for the honest old sweetheart she is, the kind of ship I used to cross in long ago, the kind of ship I understand. When I took my bath, next morning, I immediately resumed my boyhood habit of putting my head under water, to hear the engines more plainly. Perhaps not

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even McAndrew knew that trick for tallying the magnificent throb of those great cranks. And *Saxonia's* engines are worth listening to and worth seeing: no turbine oil-burning business, but the real hell-raising, crashing rhythm of quadruple-expansion cylinders, and an old-fashioned stokehold next door—not manned by Gene O'Neill's symbolical apes, but by calm and apparently cheerful fellows.

The night I speak of, I strolled aft and looked in through the brass-circled ports of the lounge, where dancing was going on. The Chief had tossed care aside for the moment and was in his dress uniform, sidling about with sailorly gusto and ingeniously steering his partners against the swing of the ship. This was a brave sign; the night before, when she was dipping her nose into great green hills, kicking her bronze fins into thin water astern, the Chief's brow was dark. After years in turbines this was his first voyage in the old *Saxonia* and there was much to ponder. While you and I were topside, hanging on to something, enjoying the scream of the gale (that had passed through the regulation stages of *moderate, fresh, strong; into full*) and that thrilling fall and quavering shudder of a ship lifting her screws into mere lather, the Chief was in dungarees paddling the bilges, watching the governor that automatically shuts down steam when she races, even crawling under boilers to see that they sat solid on their stools. For the Man Responsible takes few people's say-so in a new job. That was the kind of night when the upper deck of the big fast ships would have been unpleasant. But a solid old leisurely

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slows down to sixty-three revolutions, puts her snout creamily into it, and you don't even need the fiddles on the saloon tables.

Anything that is greatly loved, as an old ship is loved, deserves study and deserves open homage. There is a type of passenger who has been spoiled, by large cabins and running water and private baths, for the *Saxonia* sort of thing. But there are still some of us who like to know that we are aboard a ship, not a damned hotel; to whom the plain old companionways are a joy and every creak of see-saw corridors a deep music. As you lie in your narrow berth—"It's narrow, narrow make your bed and learn to lie your lane"—you study the honest pattern of bolts along the white girders overhead; you astonish to find how that cradling movement completes the whole meaning and sensation of life. So consoling, so lulling, such a perfection of curved restfulness, the creaking ease of a slow ship that takes her own time among big water seems to abolish the mind altogether. "*C'est un grand débar-ras,*" as M. France says.

The steamship companies, in their resolute desire to keep passengers amused, and in the immense complexity of their business, have somewhat forgotten the essentially metaphysical nature of sea voyage. But the tradition lingers in an unexpected place—the purser's Routine Book. I am proud of having been allowed to study this great document from end to end: it lists everything that has to be done and thought of by the ship's business manager, and you will not wonder that pursers have to wear little rainbows of ribbon on

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their bosoms to keep up their courage. But the important thing is that in the Routine Book passengers are always referred to as "souls."

So, abandoning the irrelevancy of mind, it is as a soul you travel—in the eleven-day ships, at any rate. And you become aware of a greater soul too, that of the ship herself. Gazing entranced at the roaring flicker of her stout pistons, or privileged a moment to visit the bridge (not the glassed-in conservatory of the newer craft, but the old naked dog-trot, open from wing to wing), or palavering with the Lord of Below, you begin to realize how very dear to seafaring men themselves is this old vessel that has nearly run her course. Take her how you will, in the very shape and feel of her there is an honourable loveliness that the grander sort almost miss by their sheer splendour. For the greatest ships of to-day are so marvellous that neither man nor ocean can quite live up to them: but in the *Saxonia* type both sides of the problem meet and unite in gracious content. That is why I do not hesitate to honour her by name, for ships need praise as women do. They tell me that after her quarter century she will be withdrawn: that the ship-breakers are covetous of her stout mahogany and brass. But I keep thinking of Bill the Electrical Greaser, who has lived with her dynamos ever since she first went out, more than twenty-four years ago. Bill, who would certainly lose his way if he went topside (I don't suppose he ever saw her from above) has lived with her, as men live with women and ships, for twenty-four years. And when they take her off, what will Bill do then?

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II. *CARONIA*

There must be some secret merit in the pure vacancy of a pellucid voyage like this; though one who loves to see a ship putting her nose into it may confess a private disappointment. This is now the eighth day of warm transparent weather and ballroom sea. The first night there was fog, and the whistle halloosed steadily, that deep terrorizing groan rather like the voice of John Donne in a sermon. It is a fine romantic sound to hear—when nothing happens; though, after the Chief Officer's little afternoon lecture on boat-drill, you meditate, in your bunk (not yet knowing your stateroom by heart) the exact order in which you would move toward your wife's life-preserver, your trousers, and the little folder of American Express checks. But after that one vigil there was nothing to reef the merriment of our delightful skipper. His enchanting mirth was often heard; our only gales were those of laughter proceeding from the captain's table in the saloon. The laughter of sea-captains is a comforting sound in the ears of passengers. Long may Captain Hossack and his fine *Caronia* make such comely crossings. I suppose it is a weakness of mine to believe that every ship I travel in is loveliest of all; yet I don't see how any could be more gracious to my eye than this steady old lady. A perfect vessel, nobly planned. From the boot-hole to the brass expansion-plate (I wonder how many passengers noticed that, the thwartship suture that gives and takes when she pitches) I find her full of delights; and her cranks are just as impressive as my vanished *Saxonia's*.

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There can be nothing against her except that she's faster than I knew: she turns off her 420 to 430 a day, even when three quarters of an hour have been lifted from the clock. I was a little disturbed by a sign saying that if any Rotarians on board would make themselves known, the Purser would try to arrange the weekly sacramental lunch; but the notice disappeared, so evidently there weren't any. I believe that *Caronia* must be almost the very last of the Older generation (she was built about 1905) for the smokeroom steward tried gallantly to obey orders and enforce the placard *The Smokeroom Is Reserved for Gentlemen*: but he soon gave up. What an agreeable smokeroom it is, too, with plain old panelling like a Georgian taproom and a real open fireplace—not a bed of cold glass nuggets with an electric light under 'em.

I knew a sea-captain who said he kept himself in good trim by walking round the boat-deck (in the old days it used to be called the "hurricane-deck," but there aren't hurricanes now as there were for wet little ships like the *Umbria* and *Etruria*, or the blessed old *Pennlands* and *Wæslands* and *Westernlands* and *Belgenlands* that sailed from Philadelphia in the windy nineties)—by walking round the boat-deck picking up, without bending his knees, the hairpins dropped by young women late at night. But even that calisthenic is impossible now that all the young women are shingled to the nape. It is the junior officer who gets the exercise, playing deck tennis with the clinker-built young women; it is my observation that the engineers play a more cunning game than the men from the bridge. I wonder why that is?

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Except for such pleasing interims as meals, masquerade dances, deck tennis, or cards, the merely passenger mind retires into a hypnotized serenity. It is with gazing fed; it gapes patiently over the stainless gulf and finds it as full of possibility and yet as empty of reply as a vast blue ink-bottle. Here, on this warm broad teak-wood rail, is the very attitude and home of meditation . . . but no meditations come. The only consideration that hovers in my mind, after a week of scrutiny, is that perhaps the universe itself does not think, but even implores others not to do so. With a curious kind of alarm I found myself recoiling from Keyserling's "Travel Diary of a Philosopher" which a generous publisher sent me for shipboard reading. It is exactly the kind of book I love, and on shore I shall devour it; but here, impossible. Just as I always need a few glasses of wine to unlimber my French, so the mind requires a few whiffs of the unease of earth to liberate its fatal and enjoyable reasonings. Here no literature but the merciful detective story, or the latest "Lunatic at Large" can enter in.

My nearest approach to literature has been Mr. A. Edward Newton's "The Greatest Book in the World," which I enjoyed as I enjoy all Mr. Newton's chattings; and when, to my great surprise, I found him saying "If I were sending a boy to college, I would choose Haverford," you may imagine that I believed Mr. Newton's book to be a worthy volume. I think that is only the second time, in the general literature of the world, that I have found that small and unpublicited college mentioned. I was pleased. Speaking of Storer Clouston,

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a group of people were hot-Scotching in the smokeroom and more or less feeling their way into one another's tastes. Excellent progress was being made; there was a subtle suspicion that these were kinsprits. "Now," said one, "here is a very crucial question. Are you—I have a feeling that you are—Lunatic at Large kind of people?" Yes, a cunning question! For if they hadn't been they would merely have thought it an insult, and the matter would have ended. But with a scream of pleasure they cried "Indeed we are!" and all was well.

I think I must tell you of a great triumph, because it will never happen again. Smoking alone one evening I was accosted by a genial gentleman in the doll business. He told me a good deal about the increase in the American doll industry. "Did you know," I said, "that Great Britain has removed the tax on dolls' eyelashes?" This excited him enormously, as he had not known about it. Well, I had read it in the latest issue of the *Manchester Guardian*, which reached me the morning I sailed. Nothing, after that, could dissuade him from believing that I too was a disguised magnum in the doll traffic. The information was evidently important to him, and cheered him vastly.

I don't agree with the Caliph Newton in all his delightfully crotchety musings; I think him worse than unfair to Matthew Arnold, for instance; but then you come upon so magnificent a thing as this—on Dickens—

"Of nature, in the ordinary acceptance of that word, he knew nothing, cared nothing. London was to him a vast field in which wild flowers grew, the children of the poor, and he gathered them by armfuls."

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When I found that I laid down the book with a tingle, climbed out of the steamer-chair, and went to the lonely northward deck to think it over. Has any one lately written a finer sentence?

Now, in an hour or so, we'll be sighting Land's End, and you know that prospective thrill after a week of space. No longer that slow and thoughtless feeling of mere existence, that one has in a clear calm midnight when the masthead is steady against the grainy sky. The Channel is opening her arms to us, the queer uneasiness returns, a whole Continent full of irregular verbs is waiting. And this morning when I went on deck I distinctly smelt England. For seven days we had the universe almost to ourselves. But even God, I think, was restless on the eighth day.

III. *TRANSYLVANIA*

Taking a bath at the Central Hotel, Glasgow, I had a feeling of being already at sea. For in a Glasgow bathroom you find yourself among the specially large and sturdy plumbing, deep enormous tubs and brass taps, so familiar to all travellers in the Clyde-built ships. To read the name of *Shanks and Co., Barrhead*, written in a bathtub, has always been part of the flavour of sea-adventure; how often, simmering deep in hot slanting brine, I have hummed small private madrigals in honour of Messrs. Shanks.

It would take a number of pages justly to describe the various excitements of making one's first passage from Glasgow. The journey from Euston, eight happy hours in what must be one of the world's most comfort-

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able trains, would be a theme by itself. It was odd that of all the named engines on the London Midland and Scottish line, I saw (in the yards at Crewe) the one that would give me the most surprise—an engine called *Charles Lamb*. The express that leaves Euston at 10 A. M. is timed (in October, anyhow) so that you get your glimpse of the Westmorland hills in the full shine of afternoon. Be sure to look out for the two pretty girls sitting on a stone bridge near Grayrigg; you pass them about 3:15. Then, after the very Long-Islandish country north of Carlisle, where just casually your eye catches little stations called Gretna and Lockerbie, you meet the first sunset shadows in the folds of Annandale. You'll not be wasting time drinking tea in the restaurant car; it's my guess you'll be standing in the corridor watching those lovely bare ridges, bronze as Roman helmets in honeyed light; sifted with opal in the rough ravines. And if you're a lover of differentials in language, the first thing you'll mark at the Central Station in Glasgow is the sign "*Passengers Are Requested to Shew Their Tickets.*"

Certainly philologists should always make the Glasgow passage; words that are strange and yet anciently familiar are like toys for you to play with all the way over. "Bute Hall," said one, showing me the Glasgow University by starlight. "Lord Bute?" I asked, "Aye, he gifted it." Going down to Greenock, where we boarded *Transylvania*, how pleasant to see the sign *Ground to Feu*. Speaking of calling us in the morning, "I'll just give you a chap on the door at 8 o'clock," said the steward. And the Chief Engineer, in one of those

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midday cracks after the Captain has sent word from the bridge that "the sun's over the foreyard," was telling of fishing for octopus. It's not bad meat if you don't know what it is, was the gist of his comment; "but if ye know, ye kind o' grue at it." There is some lively etymology to be taken in at every turn. Walking on the boat-deck, under the three black funnels, where that fine soupy whiff comes up the galley ventilator and sharpens the appetite, I found a small faucet marked *Boats' Breakers*. Why, one might well ponder, is a life-boat's water keg always called a *breaker*? The captain, who could outskeat many a college Ph. D in his knowledge of words, told me why. It's really *barreca*, Spanish for a small cask. This pleased me, as I already knew the French *barrigue*. There is no lingo so savoury as that of ships and charts. Even Cape Race, that ill-favoured coast which masters give a generous offering in foul weather, the Captain secretly relishes for being the tip of the Avalon Peninsula. Of the names on the Newfoundland chart I liked specially Random Sound: it seems to carry the indignant voice of perplexed old mariners. Pinchgut Tickle is another name I remember on that chart. It was Joseph Conrad, in a little essay not yet (I think) collected in his volumes, who praised the kind of writing found in Notices to Mariners and other sea-memoranda of that sort, where a lack of precision in the text may mean life or death.

We were not less lucky than John Burroughs in our hap of weather. The Clyde, as he noted long ago in "Fresh Fields," is the finest of all approaches to Britain; when we went down the firth on a transparent October

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afternoon it was at its best, reminding me of a grander Lake George. Glasgow has not been very skilful in letting the larger world know the magnificence of her noble waterway. We are all aware that she is a great shipbuilding city, but somehow we do not realize that she is approached by a winding strait among purple mountains that is surely among earth's finest picturesque. To an eye wonted to Long Island levels the fells and laws seem unexpectedly high and bluff. Goat Fell runs close upon 3000 feet; Ailsa Craig sheers up 1100 feet in one steep lump. As you glide so smoothly by the openings of a dozen lochs and sounds, each bending in among the unspoiled hills, or look over into the green apron of Ayrshire, it seems preposterous to leave this magic region barely glimpsed. I wonder if any other great manufacturing town has such fairylands at its door. By the time you have dropped the Mull of Kintyre, and Scotland fades, Rathlin Island (where the Bruce studied spiders) is in sight. It is too dark to see the Giants' Causeway, but even so to note near-by on the map such minstrel names as Coleraine and Limerick—yes, and Bushmills—gives a pensive pleasure. Off Moville the tender comes down from Derry with Irish emigrants to board the ship, a fiddler playing reels to keep their hearts up. It's a longish trip from Derry in the tender, and I imagine there may well be sore hearts among them; though some who come to see them off have much drink taken and are in very lyric mood. But the eldritch voice of the ship's whistle, as she gives the tender a final salute, seems almost a refinement of cruelty. It is so very definite. But it is part of the

Cure of Souls

“drill,” as our Scottish friends term any manner of rite; and at sea that is all-important. At Moville I received an Irish telegram, in a bright green envelope. The official notations on the form were all in Irish, beginning *Telegrafa an Phuist*, which somehow brightly conveys a suggestion of swift urgency.

Then, for a week, you are drowned in vacancy. What British weather-reports always call an “anti-cyclone” (not, as anxious females sometimes imagine, a specially violent kind of cyclone; but a period of prevailing high barometer) was with us; day after day of fresh breezy blue. A caller air, as one Scot called it. And you move in the slow and yet regularly measured circle of shipboard hours, aware of Time only in the same vague accepting way that one is aware of the surrounding sea. Almost with incredulity you read, a week later, that “Heavy baggage must be ready to be removed by 8 P. M.” and they tell you that Nantucket Light Vessel will be “made” that afternoon. There were few passengers in the first cabin, and it seemed curiously like a house-party at some large country mansion. It would be true to say that the most exciting single event of the week (barring, of course, the little meetings when the Captain and the Chief talked unpublishably of the queer ways of the sea) was the night I had a vile cold. A kindly passenger gave me tablets of aspirin and phenacetin to take in the evening hot toddy. Later, as I lay gently tilting and steaming in my berth, I woke from marvellous dreams—dreams of half-apprehended glamour and magic; visions that drift away like smoke in moonlight but still leave behind

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them an uneasy suspicion of merriments and pangs beyond the humdrum of this daily plod. It was the kind of hypnotics most teasing of all: a dim continuation of something dreamed once before. I suppose that if it were not for the greatest peril of the sea (which is over-eating) one might have more of these lovely clairvoyances on board ship. If only the steamship companies didn't feed one so well and so often, if one had the austerity to live for a week on toast and bovril and hot toddy, what golden fables might result.

And to-morrow morning we shall sight Liberty again. There's nothing so wholesome as to hear the little jokes people in other lands make about one's own country. A story now current on the other side is of a Frenchman making his first visit to America; and as he came up New York Bay an American pointed out the Statue of Liberty.

"Yes," said the Frenchman, "we do that too."

The American was puzzled. "Do what?"

"Put up statues to our dead."



THE FULL-GROWN POET

IT WAS perfectly delightful. I happened to be spending the afternoon with Q. U. when the literary editor came to interview him. I was a little troubled, because we had been talking rather unco matters, and the poet was in spate. He was in that characteristic vein where beauty and ribaldry are so strangely mixed: which must be kept dark at all costs so as not to disturb people. If he were to continue like that. . . .

"How do you do?" said the critic (at least that's how "Who's Who" lists him)—"Oh, hullo, Morley, you here? Well, well."

I made a motion to withdraw, but Q. shook his head. "Bill just wants to ask some insulting questions," he said. "I'd feel safer with a witness."

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That's one of the things I love about Q., he always has the right thing to say (even in his poems).

Bill went straight to the point.

"You remember that thing of Whitman's," he said. "About the Full-Grown Poet. Well, never mind; what I mean is, I want to write a piece about you with that title; I feel that you are Full Grown, you've got stature; excuse my being so frank. One of the things I'd like to bring out in my piece is that people don't realize the extraordinary preliminary anguish of creation, how the damned thing is threaded out of your very bowels; the contemplations, postponements, futile gropings, horrors, that precede every work of art."

Q. replied by telling a bawdy story out of the book of Genesis, which was gruesomely apropos. I hoped Bill wouldn't allude to it in his article. Even in the Borzoi Classics (each copy numbered) a similar episode was omitted from the Confessions of old Jimjam Rousseau. But Bill's powers of omission are merely vestigial.

The interviewer swivelled his eyes a little wildly (I could see his quick retina netting a mental picture of Q.'s workroom to give local colour to his sketch). A taxi-driver, swerving a dangerous corner in thick traffic, sometimes shows just such a phobic glitter.

"Fine!" he exclaimed. "I see you agree with me. Now what I like about your stuff is that, in spite of these preliminary horrors, when it comes out it comes clean. Technically clean, I mean, of course. You know Gide, the great French critic—not nearly enough known over here—quotes some lines of Baudelaire

The Full-Grown Poet

which he says form the *motif* for a great treatise on æsthetic. Order, beauty, luxury, calm, and voluptuousness: that is Baudelaire's sequence; and Gide says those are the elements of nourishment for any great work of art. Oh, gosh, Gide is great stuff: whole gangs of the young Frenchmen just stem right out of his 'Nourritures Terrestres.'"

"Out of his what?" inquired Q.

"His 'Terrestrial Nourishments,' one of his early books, published in 1897. Think of it, he was only twenty-eight when that book was written. It's a pity our folks aren't wise to Gide."

"Surely he'd be a lot less useful to you if they were," Q. began mildly. . . .

"But just let me say this before I forget it," cried Bill. "I forget whether it's Gide's idea, or my own deduction from him, but the notion is (and I believe you feel it too) that man is now *too* sharply sensitized, too self-aware; Nature's great hankering for specific self-consciousness has, in man's case, passed the margin of decreasing returns (psychological returns, I mean) and he's canted toward destruction. You know, the Henry Adams dope."

Q.'s lips began that jolly curling pout that always precedes one of his best, but Bill was leaning forward with ardent face.

"There are some fellows getting up a scientific symposium on Sex," he continued. "Something really detached, you know; genuine philosophical observation; there's always been too dam' much gross biology in the Sex business; well, they've got a lot of really

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unbiased testimony in this thing, getting it down to harmonic rhythms, graphed in orgasmic curves; nothing prettier than those curves if you really get some perspective on them. Well, they've gotten frank comments from all sorts of authors and scientists, really liberal-minded people who understand the love life."

"Yes," said Q. firmly, "I've seen the thing. They sent it to me for my opinion. I showed it to—well, to a woman I know."

"Ah?" said Bill. I knew by his manner that he felt he had struck pay-dirt for his article. "What did she think of it?"

"She said, 'Those children had better get off the merry-go-round, they'll break their necks.'"

Bill grinned in his disarming way, but was not torpedoed. "Well, I don't know," he said. "These things are rather fundamental you know. For instance, they've discovered that organic life can actually be created by alternate light and darkness striking into shallow salt water. What is that but a corroboration of the old myth that 'Dame Venus, love's lady, was born of the sea'? Anyhow, it all comes back to Walt's doctrine: whatever tastes sweet to the most perfect person, that is finally right. Havelock Ellis approves that too. . . . But of course even the parson can quote Walt to his purpose. That's the beauty of Walt. He played everlastingly safe because he caromed off every cushion there is."

There was a moment of silence while Bill lit a cigarette. Q. creaked uneasily in his chair. His remarks are usually oblique to the course of the topic.

The Full-Grown Poet

"A terrible thing happened the other day," he said. "I had been reading a volume of very modern poems, some rather bully stuff too, but a bit eccentric in typography and so on. I happened to meet the author at a dinner, and complimented him heartily on his opening poem, which seemed to me a specially rich, frolicsome bit of incoherent outburst. To my distress he was obviously annoyed. When I got home I looked at the book again. What I had thought was his opening poem was really the table of contents. Really, it was quite fine."

"Another thing I want to bring out in my essay," said Bill, "is the dignity of your attitude. I don't mean your present posture, with your feet on the desk; but your attitude toward life, toward criticism. I like your bare and robust simplicity. So many poets are madly hastening about, busy lecturing and meeting fashionables, they positively don't have time to say what they think. Perhaps it's safer that way. But there's a sort of elemental massiveness about you, like Nature herself, who is strangely silent when interviewed but has her own secret convictions."

"That's just my trouble, Bill," said Q. "I haven't any convictions. But I feel sure that if we chin a while you'll find some for me. Better stay to dinner."

"I'm awfully sorry, old man, but I must catch that next train. Got my page to make up to-night." He began rummaging in his brief-case. I had a horrid fear that he was going to produce Q.'s new book and ask him to autograph it.

"Thanks awfully for letting me come," he said. "I

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wanted to be sure I had the right slant on your ideas. If you want I can send you a proof, so you can be sure I quote you correctly. Here's a little thing I've brought you, my 'Ejaculations, First Series.' I've put your name in it for you."

He patted Q.'s shoulder affectionately, shook hands with me, invited us both to lunch, and started off. Then he turned back at the gate, his face shining with genial excitement.

"There's another line of Whitman's," he said, "that I'd like to quote you as saying. It's this: 'Let him who is without my poems be assassinated!'"

"Go to it," laughed Q. We watched the caller striding swiftly down the hill toward the station.

"Well," I said, "that's the kind of interviewer who makes it easy for you. I love his way of making you stand sponsor for his own ideas. Nice cheerful fellow, anyhow."

"Cheerful?" said Q. "Is that your idea of cheerful? Poor heroic devil."



A COFFEE-BAR

AS YOU go up the Boule' Mich', toward the Luxembourg Gardens, just above the famous old Café de la Source (whose back door, opposite the Noctambules cabaret, always suggests the beginning of a story) you pass a little coffee-bar. Café-Bar de la Sorbonne it calls itself; and I close my eyes for a moment to see it plainly. Perhaps—indeed, very likely—it is a rainy evening and you slip in there for a café-cognac to think things over. At night it is a cave of various lights. The line of little red bulbs under the pavement-awning gives just a tender pink tinge to the air and to the piles of numbered saucers. Farther in is that magnificent terrace of bottles, some with green and blue foils on their necks. The ceiling is some sort of violent mosaic, the walls are mirrors, the cane chairs are striped orange and black. The waiters are coasting swiftly

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to and fro on the sliddery sawdusted floor, going from the bar to the larger room at the rear—2 *Billards Au Fond* says the sign—into which I never penetrated. The moist zinc counter sparkles with reflections of glassy, twinkling colours. Even the buttered tartines shine with a greasy, pinkish light. Behind the bar is the man in shirtsleeves, with prominent, friendly, much-enduring eyes. How often I used to meditate as to the exact shade of temperament suggested by those eyes, which I found as difficult to put a word to as even Conrad and Ford Madox Ford (the author with the reversible name) found their fields of dark blue cabbages. They were eyes naturally friendly, but also with an under-light of weariness, or alarm, or passive suspicion; or a knowing calmness toward the stratagems of men. Eyes which, by always expressing a tinge of faint surprise, seemed to guard against the likelihood of ever being surprised further. So at any rate I used to think while I was standing at the bar drinking my coffee. *Au Comptoir, Café 30 c*, says the sign. Another subject of pondering was whether the errand boy from the near-by shoe shop had the faintest idea what the gilt letters on his cap could mean. He wore a braided uniform and the inscription on his cap was a perpetual indignation to me. Here, in the bosom of the Quarter on an actual *gradus ad Parnassum*, what legend did I find on that fellow's cap? PHITEESI, it said.

But it is not of the shoe-shop *chasseur* that I am really thinking. I am thinking of the girl, charmingly dressed in black, who used to come in every morning at the same time to ask if there was a letter. Perhaps

A Coffee-Bar

people are more indiscreet in their letters in France, and find it advisable to have them sent to café-bars instead of to their homes? Are they afraid that the wrong person will read them? They needn't worry about *me*, bless them; I find even the most innocent French script hard enough to decipher when duly addressed to me. But, anyhow, quite a lot of people have their letters sent to that café-bar. (Perhaps that is why the shirt-sleeved proprietor shows that faint brightness of disillusion in his brown eyes.) And every morning the girl I speak of used to come in rapidly, go over to the corner of the bar where Shirtsleeves kept watch over his drawerful of small change, and ask if there was a letter. There was something delicately confidential in the way she asked: she did it more with her eyes than her voice. He would glance at the row of letters tucked into the foot of the mirror and gravely shake his head. Sometimes she was positive the letter was there, if he would only take it out from the row (politely arranged addresses inward so you couldn't spot the names). That third one from the left, it looked exactly (and I thought so, too) as though it were hers. But no.

She would console herself with a cup of black coffee, while I was sideways admiring the really charming trimness of her silhouette, seen against the bright flow of the Boulevard outside. It seemed to me de-testable that she never got that letter. I even thought of writing one to her myself, if I had known exactly how to direct it. It would have been fun to watch her reading it. But, of course, it would only have troubled

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her. After her coffee she always flitted off rapidly, down the street, on her way to work, I suppose. I am still wondering whether she ever got the letter; and if so, I hope it said what she wanted to hear. Her chin, against the coffee-cup, was lovely. It was all I could see, under the *cloche* hat; but it was a very Parisian chin, showing a hint of resolute *jem'enfichisme*. So that even if the letter came, I feel sure the chin still has its small bravado.

Another woman in Paris. I had first seen her twelve years before, when she took my breath away: for I had always been told how much one ought to admire her. And I did, in a kind of dumb fool's amazement. So I went back to see her again.

You see her at the end of a long murmuring corridor. A long way off you see her whiteness: down that aisle that is full of moving people and the rustle of feet and hushed voices. She stands against dark curtains which seem black but prove, on approach, deep red. Tremulously, expecting the old thrill, you come near, disregarding the others who stand on each side the way. You have disregarded everything else—the huge Roman bathtubs (that would be so useful in some of the little Latin Quarter hotels) and the busts of Pallas. “That reminds me,” said an American lady looking at one of these, “I want to go to Brentano’s to see if the new *Ladies’ Home Journal* has come in.” And now you are in front of her—the Venus de Milo—and the old thrill doesn’t vibrate.

The body—or as the American ladies say, the torso—is as noble as ever, but what has happened? It is

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heavy, muscular, sluggish. The face is void, drowsy, without meaning. How gladly you would sacrifice it to have the lost arms; which, perhaps, would bring her alive. You try to imagine what those great white arms could have been doing that would make her more a woman and less a goddess. Alas, she is just what a statue should never be—merely statuesque.

So I went away, wondering which one of us it was who had died in those twelve years. This, that we when young eagerly frequented, this that we were somehow taught to dream of as the ultimate perfection of classic form—well, how just that she seemed: how perfect and how formal and how stony. On any street corner I could see beauty that seemed more thrilling. But I was almost afraid to admit, even to myself, how disappointed I was. And then I was reading a recent issue of the *Transatlantic Review*. It is pleasant to admit that one always finds that magazine stimulating, because Mr. Ford Madox Ford (the editor with the reversible name) says: "A man whose culture is insufficient to let him read the *Transatlantic* with pleasure is practically no better than a savage." And in that journal I found Havelock Ellis admitting the same thing about the Venus of Melos. She had died on him as she had died on me. I loved her no less, of course; but what I loved was not her majestic, heavy grace, but the memory of my own youthful zeal.

To have my secret unhappiness confirmed by Mr. Ellis was a joy such as confirmation always is. I felt the same way when, the other day, walking on a Brooklyn street, Walter de la Mare suddenly burst

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into praise of the mirthful magic of "The Wrong Box"; or when a Smith College girl asked me if there was in the world another book as amusing as Hamish Miles's "The Oxford Circus." For it is confirmation that human beings most passionately seek. And if one knew why all merely æsthetic opinions grow, flower, and decay, one would know why it is that all the arts move gently along their destined loops and returning orbits. It would not be well to know, for we should all be less instant in our small concerns. It is well to feel sure of things while we may; and not remember that even the Ten Commandments are only approximations. . . . Recurring Decimals.



BETWEEN TWO CHAPTERS

BETWEEN two chapters of a task that completely absorbed him, a dream more real than any reality, a workman paused, and came (as they say) to life.

Every day (he said to himself) is an artistic whole: it comes out of nothing and goes back to nothing, like a perfect story. Even if empty, futile, or absurd, it is an orb ed transaction. It is (you can't escape the phrase) rounded by a sleep. What is that word they have for people who are blundering somewhere too close to facts? Yes, morbid.

Every day, could he control his impatience, offers the workman the analogies he needs. Loneliness, self-disgust, postponement, mirth. Though he added "mirth" as an afterthought: for he suddenly realized that there are days when you don't laugh. Of course, one can always laugh on a moment's notice; but he was thinking of the sudden whoops of unpremeditated cheer.

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Such mirth as Pan and Cupid utter, sitting on a stump, when they think of the solemn rotarians on Olympus. These dejected them from the mountain-top because they were too mischievous for Heaven and kept spilling their ambrosia on the tablecloth. (Bibs had not been invented.) So, with no place in Heaven they had to suffer on earth as though they were men. They found it more fun: no wonder they laugh.

The workman saw it was difficult to keep his mind from going back to that crystalline abyss between the chapters. Yet he felt it wrong to go back at that moment: for the task was one in which reason, calculation, sense, could play little part. It had to be dreamed. Every man is sometimes interrupted in the course of his doings by a fit of brooding. But think of a task that is entirely brooding. He refreshed himself by adhering to that thought that every day offers the analogies one needs.

This workman had had, in one day, not less than six adventures. (1) A friendly parson had told him that another parson had told *him* "Every preacher should read 'Typhoon.'" This turned on a bulb in the workman's mind: a whole chain of coloured bulbs, as on a Christmas tree. (If one goes out they all go dark.) Yes, indeed: every preacher ought to read "Typhoon": he had never thought of it as a theological fable before. But it is, now, isn't it? (2) He was savage to a dog that had erred. This was a rambling dog of less than no reputation who had, at a critical passage of the workman's reverie, interrupted him by a gross misbehaviour—which was not, perhaps, its "fault." (Imagine talk-

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ing of a dog's "fault." I can hear Pan cackling on his stump.) He chastised the poor brute, thrust it out into a very cold night. Soon he was troubled and went on the porch to whistle. But there was no answer. This set him reading Meredith: he remembered the poem about thrashing a dog. It is not a well-known poem, for Meredith marred it by stilted lingo. He thrashed the English language as well as the dog. He was not so good, maybe, at the simpler moralizings. His extraordinary jargon required subtler themes for its felicity. Take "Lord Ormont and His Aminta": magnificent passages, but how perilously close to Ouida is the general flavour.

(3) He saw a cat come up from the cellar and find unexpected scraps of fish in her plate. She flung herself upon them with a passion that revived his admiration of life. She crouched (her little propped elbows showing the lighter fur) purring and guzzling in ecstasy. He imagined how a tiger would look at a similar feast.

(4) A child four years old, wearing only her shirt, was standing at a basin gravely washing her hands. He told her that a letter had come for her; that when she was ready for bed it would be read to her. She gave him brown eyes of solemn excitement. "And then I can have it?" she said. (5) He was chopping a dead tree, by a frozen pond. The sharp ax shore clean pat-terny slants into the pink wood. "She must have some of the noble flavour of wood-cutting," he said, thinking of someone in the task he was working on. "I've dipped her too far in darkness." (6) He woke from a dream. I will tell you the dream.

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There was a tropical sand beach; and for some unknown reason it was imperative that he and another man should swim, at once, to the town that could be seen a mile or so away across the water. The town was on cliffs that were lilac against sunset; a lighthouse winked jewel-pale in the honey-coloured light. Others were on the beach, hastening them on. They had run down to look for a rowboat, which wasn't there. They must swim. There was no inkling as to the nature of the danger, but there was instant necessity. They waded into the water, which was shallow so that they had to wade a long way, the other man a little ahead. The sandy bottom was heavy and sticky, the water in that ruddy light seemed thick and viscid. It was full of strange weeds, ferns, clinging sponges of vegetation; there was a feeling of crabs. At last the water was deep enough for swimming, but as they threw themselves forward for the struggle it seemed like liquid glue. They toiled and threshed in that warm slow element, like flies in molten amber; the level sun gilded them with mocking light, the distant cliffs deepened to violet, night was onward. The other man drew slowly, slowly ahead. It was impossible, it couldn't be done, it ended.

Among the thousand haunting analogies of every day, how is the workman to choose those which will minister to his job? Well, that is his affair. Reasoning can help little. He ensues that "selected proportioned illusion of life" of which Walter de la Mare spoke in his lecture on *The Supernatural in Fiction*. He cannot compete with life itself in its fecundity. Just as psychic

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or physical shocks happening to the gravid woman will have their effect on the unborn child, so is it with a writer in travail.

It is a hard doctrine (said the workman, as he timidly returned toward that strange emptiness lying between the ink and the vision) but it seems as though every day is the microcosm. Every day, from toothpaste to toothpaste, is an artistic whole; it offers the fables we need if we have the courage to scan them. There, at the edge of his crystalline abyss he stands waiting the uncalculable bridge of dream: and the work itself must be rounded by a sleep. What was it Anatole France said? "No book is worth writing if you can completely understand it."



A MIRROR FOR MAGISTRATES

THE Urchin and I were coming home from Baltimore with a suitcase full of old books, good old juvenile treasures such as "The Plant Hunters" (by Captain Mayne Reid, I hope I don't have to tell you) and "Voyage au Centre de la Terre" and "At the Back of the North Wind"; and even the tattered family copy of "Tom Holt's Log: A Tale of the Deep Sea." I don't know who wrote it, for the binding and title-page are both gone; and I don't know whether I dare reread it, for it's sure to be a disappointment. But it contains Polly, the first girl in fiction I ever fell in love with.

Of course, quite a nice piece could be written about the sentimental pleasures of going along the shelves of vanished boyhood and bringing back, with an eight-year-old Urchin, some of the things that will now be his

A Mirror for Magistrates

excitement. But while he was deep in "The Boy's Own Indoor Book" (Lippincott, 1890), seduced by the same fascinating chapter on How to Make a Toy Locomotive that used to delight me, I was getting out some old schoolbooks from the suitcase. Here was the edition of Milton's "Minor" Poems that I had used—no, not so awfully long ago; in 1905, to be exact. I fell to reading the Notes, which fill 71 pages of small type. (The poems, only 56 pages of much larger.) Then, in the sweet retired solitude of the B. & O. smoker, Contemplation began to plume her feathers and let grow her wings.

I don't quite know how to admit you to the traffic of my somewhat painful meditations except by quoting a few of the notes my startled eyes encountered. I had forgotten that schoolbooks are like that. It is astounding that any one ever grows up with a love for poetry. Was anything ever written more wholesomely to be enjoyed than "L'Allegro"? You remember the lines,

*To hear the lark begin his flight,
And, singing, startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies,
Till the dappled dawn doth rise;
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good-morrow . . .*

Fairly translucent, aren't they? Mark you then what the fifteen-year-old finds in the Notes:

Then to come, etc. This passage is obscure. (1) It may mean that the lark is to come to L'Allegro's

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window and bid him "good-morrow." In this case we must make *to come* and *bid* depend on *to hear* (41), and suppose that the unusual *to* before *come* is made necessary by the distance between it and the governing verb. But such a construction is awkward. The interpretation, moreover, forces us to make the phrase *in spite of sorrow* almost meaningless by applying it to the lark; it makes it difficult to account for L'Allegro seeing the performance of the cock described below (51-52); and, finally, obliges us to suppose Milton ignorant of the lark's habits, since the bird never approaches human habitations—an ignorance we are not justified in assuming if the passage can be explained in some other way. (2) Another interpretation makes *to come* and *bid* depend on *admit* (38). "Awakened by the lark, the poet, after listening to that early song, arises to give a blithe good-morrow at his window. Other matin sounds are heard, and he goes forth," etc. (Browne). Those who adopt this view explain that he bids "good-morrow" to "the rising morn," "the new day," or "the world in general." (3) Masson, however, thinks that L'Allegro is already out of doors. "Milton, or whoever the imaginary speaker is, asks Mirth to admit him to her company and that of the nymph Liberty, and to let him enjoy the pleasures natural to such companionship (38-40). He then goes on to specify such pleasures, or to give examples of them. The first (41-44) is that of the sensations of early morning, when, walking round a country cottage, one hears the song of the mounting skylark, welcoming the signs of sunrise. The second is that of coming to the cottage window, looking in, and bidding a cheerful good-morrow, through the sweet-brier, vine, or eglantine, to those of the family who are also astir." This last interpretation is perhaps more in keeping with the good-hearted sociability of L'Allegro's character. But see Pattison, *Milton*, p. 23.

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A little farther on we read in the poem that . . .

*Every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn in the dale.*

Tells his tale. Counts the number of his sheep (Warton, on the suggestion of Headley). For *tell* meaning "count" and *tale* meaning "number," see *Psalm* xlvi, 12, *Exodus* v, 8, though it must be confessed that when *tell* and *tale* are combined, as in the present passage, "the almost invariable meaning is to narrate something" (Keightley). In view of this last fact, *tells his tale* is also interpreted as "relates his story"—*tale* being taken either in the general sense of "any story" or in the particular sense of "a love-tale." "But (1) this [particular sense] would be a somewhat abrupt use of the word *tale*. (2) The *every* shows that some piece of business is meant. (3) The context too shows that. (4) The early dawn is scarcely the time for love-making.

Signor Allegro mentions mountains. The Notes retort smartly "There are no mountains in the vicinity of Horton, where Milton probably wrote these poems." The poem refers to "towers and battlements"; Notes give us: "These," says Masson, "are almost evidently Windsor Castle." "With wanton heed and giddy cunning," writes Milton, having a gorgeous time (his pen spinning merrily for the instant) but Notes pluck us back with "The figure is an oxymoron; consult a dictionary and explain."

Truly, like the drudging goblin, the editor's

*. . . shadowy flail hath threshed the corn
That ten day-laborers could not end.*

The Romany Stain

Fortunately our friend Morning Face, at fifteen, pays little attention to the insinuating questions and cross-references of the editor. Nor do I wish to seem unkind. This sort of small-beer parsing has, I dare say, its usefulness. In the voice of genuine magistrates it may even be thrilling. But heavens! Do you intend children to read poetry as though it were a railway time-table?

In lines 317-18 of "Comus" Milton speaks (very prettily) of the "low-roosted lark" rousing from "her thatched pallet." I spare you the scholastic editor's explanation that "low-roosted lark" means "the lark in her low resting-place," and that "roost, even to-day, is used figuratively for any temporary resting-place." But on "thatched pallet" he is beyond price. Oyez:

Thatched, as Masson suggests, may here refer to the texture of the nest itself, and not to the covering. Keightley, however, says: "The ideas here belong rather to a henhouse than to the resting-place of the lark, which has no *thatch* over it, and in which, as it is on the ground, he does not *roost*."

I'm sorry: I can't go on quoting these nonsenses. If the pupil paid any genuine attention to them, which probably he doesn't, he'd get a queer kind of notion of how Milton wrote. He'd imagine that "Comus" was put together with the author's eyes on Homer, Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Shakespeare, and what not, picking out the plums. Of course, a thing like "Comus" is likely to pass like a swoon over the head of Fifteen anyhow; it is too full of the things that no gross ear

A Mirror for Magistrates

can hear. Yet it would seem that an annotator might say less about the Earl of Bridgewater and more of the fact that the masque was written by a boy of twenty-five, which accounts for so much that is gloriously Bachelor-of-Artish in it. Instead of memoranda about "pleonasms" and "quadrisyllables" it would perhaps make the thing more human to the luckless pupil if he realized that the Lady was so obviously a phantom of a high-minded young celibate's imagination. How delightfully young-Miltonian she is: how differently he would have done her after his marriage to Miss Powell. And the simpering and gooseberry-headed Brothers. . . . But I'm not a teacher of literature, I have no right, probably, to expose my own ideas about such matters. After reading through the Notes on "Comus" in this very reputable edition (still used by thousands of children) I seemed to have been present at a murder. I could see the corpse of Milton in the ditch, and the bloody Piemontese—or was it the Modern Language Association—marching in lock-step down the highway.

The disturbing part of it all is that it renews the unpleasant suspicion that the professional teachers of "English" do not always have any very clear idea of what literature is all about, or how it is created. Such pitiable haggling over absurd irrelevancies is, in Don Marquis's fine phrase, to play veterinary to the horse with wings. Poetry, God help us, is men's own hearts and lives; it is both a confession and a concealment. It rarely means exactly what it seems to. If we knew why Milton reached his most magnificent vibrations of eloquence when speaking for Comus and for Satan

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we might know why—in the good old Lexicographer's phrase—he suffered at Cambridge “the publick indignity of corporal correction.”

Poetry happens when a mind bursts into a sudden blaze; and the annotators gather round, warming their hands at a discreet distance as they remark that such and such a glowing ember is an echo from Horace or Virgil, or a description of Windsor Castle. As though a poet like Milton, in his godlike fit, gives a damn where the mysterious suggestion arose. To marginal loveliness with such trivial scribble is (let's adapt one of Comus's own lines) to live like Poetry's bastards, not her sons. How shall we justify the ways—not of God to man, but of teachers to literature? And you will hunt in vain in the textbooks for the most human tribute ever paid to Milton. It is this: the only time Wordsworth ever got drunk was when he visited Milton's old rooms at Cambridge.



A PACKAGE

THERE is a passage at the end of "Alice in Wonderland" that excellently describes how some farm-yard sounds, recurring under the dream, gradually break through the mist of Alice's fancy and bring her two worlds into one.

Living in a dream at Donville in Normandy, there were three special sounds, endlessly repeated, that used to come chiming through the uneasy apprehensions of one who sat in a thatched cottage trying to write. The jingling bells of the baker's high-wheeled cart and other *fournisseurs* who sped merrily outside our stone wall. The sudden appalling outcry of donkeys, like the scream of a rusty pump-handle. And, behind all other voices, the solemn hoot of the narrow-gauge train on the

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Chemin de Fer de la Manche. Such a little railway, and it took itself with such charming seriousness.

Yes, I am thinking this morning of those serious little trains that go trundling northward from Granville, through Bréhal with its slender spire, and Chanteloup with its château, along the green trough of the Sienne; past Gavray and Hambye (where is the ruined abbey) to Percy and Tessy. I can see the little engine, with two jacks on the bumper ready to hoist it back on the track if anything goes wrong. The engine has very tiny drive-wheels and a very tall smokestack; on the front of the boiler is a big handle that makes it look more than ever like a toy to be wound up. Then there come a couple of freight cars, and two wagons for passengers. There is a first-class compartment upholstered in red leather, but I never saw any one riding in it. Along the top of each car is a signboard that recommends *Benedictine* or *Amer Picon* or something else to drink. And you sit on the wooden seats and watch the butterflies scared up in clouds as you go puffing through the slanting Norman meadows at perhaps ten miles an hour. At Bréhal you wait fifteen or twenty minutes while they shunt on a truck of baled seaweed. At Ver (the right name for a fishing village) the anglers get in with their creels of catch.

I like the Chemin de Fer de la Manche for taking itself seriously. Even when it misses the connection at Cérences (where it crosses the full-sized railway) you won't get any humility out of the young conductor. With a horn to squawk, a whistle to blow, a big leather box full of tickets of different colours and rat-

A Package

ings, all sorts of miscellaneous baggages to hoist on and off, and a big turnip watch to look at now and then, he is a felicitous youth. I only wish he were a little more powerful, considering the weight of some of the dunnage he hefts. I have a horrid feeling that he is overstraining himself sometimes.

But now you are wondering why I am thinking of the Chemin de Fer de la Manche this morning, and why I can suddenly hear the dignified and continuous whistle of that little train. (It would go faster, I think, if the proud engineer didn't spend so much steam in whistling.) I will tell you why.

One of the pleasant perplexities in going abroad and then coming home again is connected with the matter of parcels. In spite of careful instructions, people will mail packages to your foreign address. They arrive after you have left, and then what happens?

There are several stations of the C. F. M. in Donville: in this way Donville and the railway, though both very small, keep up their self-esteem. There is Donville-Blancs Arbres, for instance, and Donville-Something Else, and Donville-Triage. (Just what *Triage* means I never could quite find out.) These stations are all very minute, but they are carefully listed on the timetable. Donville-Triage was *our* station. And the other day I get a letter from the station-master at Donville-Triage. I am sure he remembers me; he will not have forgotten how, the first time I wanted to take a ride on the C. F. M., I went down to call on him the evening before to present my compliments, apprise him of my intentions, and get all the dope. I wanted

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to know specially how to buy the right kind of ticket for riding in one of those open carriages. I must effectuate my traject in full air was what I told him. He was pleased at my enthusiasm and promised me everything. But then when the train came (it leaves Donville-Triage at 10:15, in case you should want to take it) they had left off the open carriages that day.

Well, it appears from the Chef de Gare's letter that someone, whose name he puts down as Fibert Saint Phila (my guess is that it's someone on Filbert Street, Philadelphia, but I have no notion who) has sent me a package, and the question is what shall be done about it. I believe, for the honour of the Chemin de Fer de la Manche, I will copy the letter in exact translation:

Station of DONVILLE-TRIAGE
27 December, 1924.

Dear Sir:

There is arrived in the Station addressed to you, dispatched by Mr. Fibert Saint Phila, merchandises as follows:

	I Postal Packet
which are at your disposition against the sum of	
	O Fr. 86 for carriage
	O Fr. 25 for expense of notification
Total	I Fr. 11.

I pray you to have these merchandises carried away immediately, warning you that at the expiration of the hereinunder-indicated delay they will be submitted to the legalities of storage determined by the tariff.

The person who will take delivery in the Station will have to be bearer of the present letter fortified by your signature at the bottom of the following notice.

If they were not lifted away from the Station in the

A Package

48 hours from the putting to post of the present letter of advice, they would be able to be trucked away from the office, and without other warning, into a public magazine, where they would remain at your disposition.

I have the honour to salute you.

THE CHIEF OF THE STATION.

My first thought on receiving this was to write to the friendly Chef de Gare saying that whatever may be in the parcel I will give it him as a present. But, with my usual slackness about letters, I didn't do so; besides, that might involve all sorts of legal correspondence, signing of international waivers and what not. I remember what trouble I got into when a friend of mine, touched by my wails about French pipe-fuel, sent me a package of tobacco from America. I was pursued all summer by mandamuses from Paris urging me to appear and explain why I was importing contraband. I think the best thing to do is allow the Donville-Triage station-master to believe me dead.

Besides, the parcel is probably only a book to autograph. Few people realize how much woe has been caused in this world by the two Eddies (Eddie Bok and Eddie Newton) who wrote books describing how they began when very young to collect autographs and never took No for an answer. There isn't a mail nowadays arriving in the home of any one who ever published a book that doesn't contain letters from Young Collectors. They even send you the wretched books, taking it for granted you'll sign them and wrap them up and send them back. And then, by-and-bye, they write and accuse you of theft.

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But I like to think that the little train came puffing up the valley from Granville to Donville-Triage, along the Road of Iron of the Sleeve, carrying a package with my name on it.

The Chief of Station, looking over his records, must occasionally see that name and wonder what became of the strangely eloquent and ungrammatical alien. He will not realize, perhaps, that I wear a part of my heart in La Manche.



A BIRTHDAY LETTER

(February 10, 1925)

YOU understood about human weakness, so you will know how it is that I have left writing for your birthday until this last possible moment. I've been looking over some of your old letters. I don't do so often, it is too troublesome to see how some have misfeatured you. Then last night, about bread-and-cheese time—the *wishing* time of the evening you used to call it, when one rather hankers for some friend to drop in (to get between one's self and Eternity)—I began gapping stupidly into the fire, wondering how to light a candle for your cake. It was a different fire from yours: a fire of logs: wood that might have been made into desks. It was silly of me to sit brooding

The Romany Stain

there, for to you of all men a letter should be the unstudied excess of the mind. But it was the distance between us, as snow was sifting, that chilled my fingers. You have said pleasant things about the difficulties of Distant Correspondence; but no letter was ever addressed you from so far as this. I sat there, empty of everything but angry love. I could not write, so in your honour I had some hot water with its Better Adjunct, and went to bed.

What can I tell you that would interest you most? There are still Richardsons about (you remember him, the fellow who used to keep you waiting for your holidays? What an uneasy immortality he got himself thereby); and fellows like Rickman, of whom you said that he didn't have to be told a thing twice, are still rare birds. But it is as impossible to be bored on Murray Hill as it was on Fleet Street. Your old anxieties about abstaining from tobacco and liquor would be made more metaphysical here, since the abstention is supposed to be compulsory. You'd be amused, if you knew how you are regarded as a gospel for the young, "studied" in schools, your desperate and special humour conned as a textbook of "whimsicality." Yes, they still label you "the gentle." They have forgotten your letters to S. T. C., imploring him to substitute drunken, shabby, unshaven, cross-eyed, stammering, or any other epithet that rang true in your ear. So endlessly has your "gentleness" been drummed into young ears that there has been, among our more savage juniors, a kind of odd blindness as to the real you. Perhaps they do not know you as you are

A Birthday Letter

in your letters. The rest of you, I must confess, it is long since I read. I am not a systematic reader, I love to gather my notions of people from their casual ejaculations rather than where they open themselves deliberately. So it is in your letters that I have you and hold you. There you have taught us, more than a hundred novelists could do, what love means. It suffers long and is kind. There I see your trouble and weakness so much greater than many others' strength. There I see you laughing at solemn apes; I see your divine silliness and your rich shrewdness. Sometimes, when my self-pitying generation beats its breast, I think of your magnanimous patience. I think of your rockets of absurdity, sent up like sea signals on a dark sky of loneliness. I think of those last days when you and Mary said that the auction posters were your play-bills. I think of your great love story—yours and Mary's—perhaps the bravest in the world. Then I wonder whether some of us nowadays should not write an *Apologia pro Vita Sua*—an Apology for living in a Sewer.

You could remember "few specialties in your life," you wrote once for someone (a publisher, perhaps?) who wanted a blurb about you. Except, you added, that you "once caught a swallow flying." Indeed you did: the wild fierce bird of laughter with wet eyes. I think that to have known you when you had been walking arm in arm with Barleycorn and cast no shadow on the pavements of Covent Garden would have been very close to my idea of religion. I smile, as you did, to remember that the Woodbridge Book Club

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blackballed your volume. There was something in it—they did not know just what—that was not quite seemly. This implicates me, too, for some of my forbears, I suspect, may have cast a black pellet or so in that matter. I apologize: and neither of us loves them any the less for their genteel simplicity. And indeed that strange fancy of yours, when brightened into flame by understanding intercourse, must have been a lovely and reproachable sight.

We shall receive no letters in the grave, someone said: Doctor Johnson, perhaps. It is just as well, for you would scarcely relish this one. But it had to be written. If there are 150 candles on this cake of yours, they will be put there by the 150 who think of you not as the gentle, but as the tormented, desperate, mad, and tipsy Elia. Still, as you said of the "Ancient Mariner," literature can sting us through sufferings into high pleasure. "I shall never like tripe again." Once you wrote "I never saw a hero; I wonder how they look." Ah, dear Charles, you need not have searched far. Mary could have told you.



THE MATERIAL TO THE ARTIST

I HAVE seen it coming on. Now it must be said. It is my dangerous privilege to tell you what I seem to have discerned.

Happiest, unhappiest of creatures! Do you know what you are? I will tell you. I will tell you, though I hate the word, misused by thousands of canting weathercocks. Yet among those who have taken out their passports for that foreign land the word is still valid. Poor soul, you are an artist.

You are an artist; an artist in the true sense; in the sense that thousands of men and women who never set hand to manuscript or canvas or clay, who work in offices and ride in daily elevators and tend babies in the suburbs, are also artists. You are an artist because you feel; yet mere feeling does not make you an artist. You are not an artist because you are unhappy, or because you are wilful, or because you are impatient with conventions and things that rhyme with long ago. No,

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my dear; the artist, more than any other, values conventions at their high serene worth. Conventions—comings together—of the apt congruent mood, circumstance, intuition. And when he ruptures convention he does it consciously, meaningly, that the audience may be aware the convention exists. “I can do without God,” one may have said to himself. But the mere so saying proves His existence. You are an artist because you feel—and control and modulate your feelings. “Waking life is a dream controlled,” said Santayana.

You are an artist, my dear, because you are aware of the rich medium of pathos, absurdity, glamour, in which all human actions are set. You are an artist because you are aware. Aware of those little characteristic things, those strange revealing episodes, outcroppings of mirth, of horror, that typify the whole of life in miniature. You are a microscope. You are an artist in the sense that the cubist painter Nevinson is an artist, the poet de la Mare is an artist, the architect Gilbert is an artist, the paragrapher Adams is an artist. You see the world in a grain of sand. It is no credit to you. That queer besetting sense of values was born in you, somehow. A wind blew—a mandrake root yelped—a star slid—there it was. You found in your heart that mad conviction that the whole gigantic show of earth and behaviour was set in motion for you alone. That the planet has laboured and created railway terminals and terraced buildings and beautiful women and toy balloons and subway cars full of dogged faces—for you, for your devoted amazement. For

The Material to the Artist

you, for this your moment of pitiful scrutiny, for this latest tremor of crumbling Now, the vast edifice of fairy tale swinked upward. Like the fiery bird of fable, you rise from red embers of poor burning selves and ecstasies forlorn. In this glory of you, you can afford to be humble. Lord help you, happiest, unhappiest of creatures.

And what have I to do with this? I am acting merely, for the instant, as the material for your art (don't misunderstand me). I am spokesman for the empty paper, proxy for the chunk of stone. I know that you will blunder; that you will see falsely; overboldly perhaps, overtimidly perhaps. I know you will be troubled. "A tadpole in a sea of flame," someone said. But your hunger will carry you through—your hunger for human contact, your passion for honest human value. This power, this power that is in you, will blunder; will warm you with shame in your lonely bed at night. But, knowing how your thoughts run, of one thing I am certain. You will never overdraw your account in the greatest security of all. You love life, and none of your checks on that commodity will come back cancelled *No Funds*. Let me give you, for your private ledger, three mottoes. Here they are:

It is only the generous who give to the rich, the big who praise the big; the niggardly salve their consciences in doles to the humbly poor, making life into a pilgrimage of greedy patrons in search of grateful victims.

ELIZABETH BIBESCO.

The nobler a soul is, the more objects of compassion it hath.

BACON.

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I wear a high hat because it's a charm against passion.
—From "Roger Bloomer," by J. H. LAWSON.

This last—how superb it is—from that remarkable play by John Howard Lawson is, though ironically uttered, the perfect sentiment for the artist. He must have passion; but he must charm it; he must sing to it; he must soothe it to his needs, to the needs of other desperadoes.

Does that sound cowardly? Is it praise of the small sconced glim rather than of the blazing torch and cresset—that lights fools and wise men both the way to dusty death? I don't know; nor any man. Nor does it matter. The wind of your desire will move through you and speed you in your own channels. You will hardly even know how you have chosen. Being what you are, I know—aye, too well I know—that I (only a mouthpiece here in behalf of your still blank foolscap) can teach you nothing of the meaning of the artist's desire. Yet (I speak as the voice of your unwritten dreams) the anxiety of the Material is no less real than the yearning of the Workman. I shall blow through you as the wind; pattern your darkness as the stars. And even that will not be enough. Oh, brave fabric of life, that waits to be possessed, moulded, held and shaped and kenned. You have had the heroics so far; now let me speak the lines. Can the Pen (which is you) tell the Paper (which am I) anything about wanting? Poems must be lived before they can be written, I heard you say. Aye, but who has more fully lived the wistful poem of not being fulfilled? It is I,

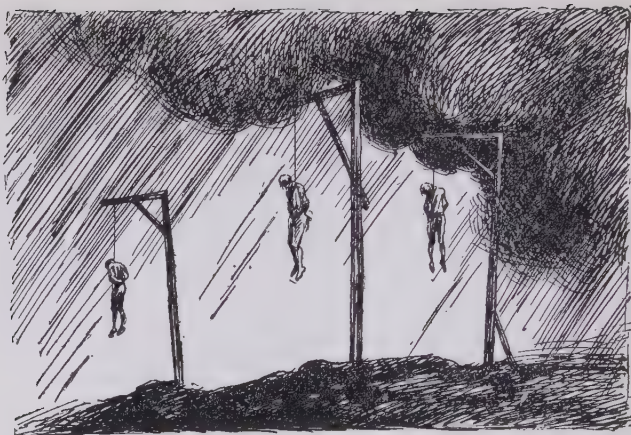
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not you, that shall be the mover. I shall wet your nib and I shall speed your hand. Passion, pride and fury, and pitiable humility, too—these are mine. Are they less noble than your small zeal of achievement? I shall be God; you the ritual. You shall never possess me. “Grave is her shape, and sweeter unpossessed.” Yet . . . it was not she who said so.

To some such purpose, maybe, the fabric speaks to the fabricator. And now, returning to our original parts—beloved and lucky rascal, I repeat it: you are an artist. You are an artist because you see the shadows cast by the actors. Life, clumsy or malicious electrician, throws crosswise shafts upon his puppets; each is mimicked not only by one shadow but by several. You are aware of these shadows, which so many do not see. Are you a *creative* artist? Is your trouble such that it forces you to communicate it? That I cannot tell. In any case, these strange, self-comforting, and self-harassing perceptions of ours must be our best consolation. They must be the shadow of the great rock in a weary land. Even so, a shadow is never more than a shadow.

My mind goes back again to that play, “Roger Bloomer,” which I have just read. A strange little play; very young in its rebellions; very old (as old as “Faust,” whatever the childlike critics may say) in its jolly and ingenious technique. There are some closing lines that struck me as nobly fine:

I’ve given you yourself, take it. . . . Face the music, falling about you like rain.



JAMIE COMES TO HY-BRASIL

GREAT things happen: sometimes in a burst of instantaneous completion; oftentimes by slow indignations, through every grade of postponement, doubtful addition, and nail-paring disgust. But they do happen, and sooner or later the man with a blessing hears about them. The magic that moves our days brings us, by unsuspected curvature, home to ourselves. Believing our path to be a straight line—and going up, of course—we do not feel it leaning and bending beneath us, nor know it was a circle until we hear ourselves repeating what we said before—in a little louder voice.

The beginning of this particular magic (so far as I am blessed by it) was one snowy day when an enchanter (you would not have known him as such, if you saw him

Jamie Comes to Hy-Brasil

carrying a black leather suitcase and bulged about with a greatcoat from which I saw a glass phial protruding) descended from the train at Manhasset. Certainly it would take too long to tell you about this enchanter, how we sat by the fire together, how it snowed, how he went to a meeting of the Poetry Society that night (against all my advice, for nothing so surely nips the deep root of poetry in the breast as annual dinners of Poetry Societies), and what he wrote to me about it afterward. I will merely call this enchanter Tom, since that is his name.

While we were sitting at lunch Tom was narrating a passage from a book he had read. It was an Irish book and Tom being Irish himself he conveyed the full flavour of it. It was one of the most thrilling feats of memory that I have ever applauded: it was not memory but re-creation. He recounted, in the just accent, the tale of three notable miscreants who were hanged. One of these malefactors was annoyed because there were not enough women present. Another was bored, and yawned so gappingly that the executioner could hardly adjust the rope, and reproached him for his rudeness. The third was so thirsty that even as he swung he could not die until he had been taken down and given a drink. I give you these bald details merely because, so given, they sound nothing at all. But when you read them—or hear them in the Irish voice—they become that small bonfire of mirth, gilding the lower branches of the dark Tree of Life, that we call literature. Even the children at the table forgot to prattle while Tom told this story.

The Romany Stain

The book it comes from, though by one of the authors who means most to me, I had not encountered. I had not even heard of it. Then, a few days later, I saw it in a bookstore. I averted my eyes, for I was accompanied by several under-nourished phantoms of my own who were clamouring for blood, and I did not want to hearten myself with other men's ghosts. But then, not half an hour afterward, in the cabinet of another enchanter, whom we will call Mitchell (also, by odd coincidence, his name), I saw the book again. I opened it and began to read; I saw, what I had not been quite certain of, that it was the same that Tom had mentioned. "Take it along," said Mitchell. I was so eager to do so that I tried to persuade him not to give it to me. "Nonsense," he said, "I have two copies. I always buy two copies of every book, so I can give one away."

And then, the third enchantment. I was going home in the train, two or three days later. I was approaching the end of the book; approaching it with dismay, as one struggles to wrap round him the dissolving shreds of a dream that is about to vanish. The man in the seat beside me must have been a third magician, though I had not guessed it, for he was reading the *Evening Journal* and wore a particularly Hollywood shape of hat. He got out at Great Neck and left his paper on the seat. I laid down my book with the notion that Mr. Hearst would surely have provided something sufficiently grotesque to ease me of the exquisite pang of what I had been reading. And the very first thing I see in the *Journal* is an appalling photo-

Jamie Comes to Hy-Brasil

graph of the author of my precious book; and an interview with him; he had landed in New York that day.

This does not prove anything. (What does?) But it suggests that it is not well to neglect the magic that moves round us. If you sew together enough random scraps of it you will have an apron of fig-leaves almost large enough to conceal you from the world. And it set me thinking as to how the man who wrote that book might better have been welcomed to New York than by the interview in the *Journal*, which purported in a noisy way to elicit his views on Love; or even than the photograph, which showed him in a hat quite as distressful as the one that got off at Great Neck, or the plush horror that I am wearing myself at this moment because I am going to the theatre this evening. How, I wondered, should James Stephens have been met; and what could be said? For that is his name; the James Stephens who wrote "The Demi-Gods," and who wrote the book of which I speak here—"In the Land of Youth."

This is a question to which there can be no answer. Literary criticism is a fine and fecund art; as some writers perform it—for example, William Gerhardt, in his book on Chehov, which does not seem to have received its due honour—it is an excitement and a warmth in the mind that linger for months after the reading. But a book such as "In the Land of Youth" transcends the realm in which criticism is viable. It is unmixed moonlight; moonlight neat. It fulfils that beautiful truth that Mr. Gerhardt (in the Chehov book) laid down—"A work of art whose aim and meaning

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were quite clear to the writer in the act of writing it would perish, as the universe would perish if its aim was clearly known to it." In the case of such a book, people who can enjoy it will need no help; and those who cannot could never be taught how. For the author of such a book the only just reception (perhaps) would be to have no one meet him at all: to have the pier and the dockside streets cleared of any one who might possibly know who he was; and to have every publisher in town herded in the lobby of some hotel until, at the touch of a hand-bell, Mr. Stephens appeared, with a gay symbolic gesture, to release them. I am not joking: for it is such men as Mr. Stephens who justify the existence of publishers and make their lives interesting and their jovial trickeries of distribution atonable and good.

"Your mind had to be tormented and fevered and exalted before you could see a god," is said somewhere in "In the Land of Youth." It is a strange book; to make it fashionable among some of the moderns we might call it a fantasy of miscegenation between two worlds—that of the gods and that of men (or Irishmen anyhow). And those that find it unreadable will be, I suppose, the lucky ones. Certainly no writer can afford to read it unless he is very stout-hearted; for he will find in it the music, the laughter, the simplicity, the bare and evasive truth, that he himself probably missed in a soap-sud of words. Luminous as crystal, it gathers light around it until it shines with a brightness of its own; a brightness pure and unpurposeful enough to show how dark the world is.

Jamie Comes to Hy-Brasil

If Mr. Stephens was welcomed, as he should have been, by a file of publishers in shackles; and if, as he would, he then struck the irons from their ankles and greeted them with some merry redeeming word; and if they then repaired to various telephone boxes to order a resumption of the precessions of the press, well and good. If he was not so welcomed, I don't know what to suggest, except that I am willing to show him my private cathedral. From this secret eyrie where I hide and write I look out upon the great piers of the Brooklyn Bridge. They are pierced by tall lancet openings, that look, in the pearly East River air, like vast cathedral windows. There are two of these empty windows at each end; and between them rises my imagined cathedral. Of its creed or its various architecture I have nothing to say; of its shadowy tablets—whether to Walt Whitman or to Charles Edward Montague, or whoever—I do not now speak. But it would be pleasant to take Mr. Stephens down the aisle of that intangible minister, and to let him hear the organ sounding in honour of the unknown god, who disciplines no parishes and no sects; the god who now and then allows great poetry to be written. I should lay near the altar a copy of “In the Land of Youth,” and say to Mr. Stephens:

“So came Jamie to Hy-Brasil.”



LITTLE JOURNEYS

I HESITATED before raising the blind, for this was going to be a Moment. I wanted to get the full taste of it. The lower berth was comfortable, I had found a diagonal position that eluded the usual hump in the middle. I had slept well, after some midnight twinges of laughter with "The Constant Nymph"; I had arranged clothes and toothbrush and razor in careful order where they would be easily at hand. I didn't know exactly what time it was: presumably there had been a change in the clock, but was it earlier or later than my watch? At any rate, the thought of grapefruit was present. And now, to-day, I was to look for the first time on the reality behind two great names—names of romance since my boyhood. Ohio . . . Indiana . . . what lovelier words are there?

Little Journeys

I raised the blind. It was a mild, pearly morning: a pale haze lay over wide fields softly silvered with dainty frost. A little grey farmhouse stood among trees, with a barn that asked me to chew MAIL POUCH. A tract of corn stubble dipped down toward a pond, and some small roan pigs were snouting about. It felt like Winesburg, it was as lovely as a dream. I remembered Sherwood Anderson's "Tandy." I knew that Anderson had told the truth, as poets usually do. Perhaps they are the only people you can depend on for the truth. Even the suburbs of Columbus could not dismay me after that first glimpse. I thought of O. Henry in prison in Columbus, and I thought of Omar Khayyâm making his first American appearance in that city. On the fences of Xenia I saw bills for "Abie's Irish Rose."

But it is Indiana, not Ohio, that is the burden of my song. How can one decently impart a first impression of Indianapolis? Its very name, so pleasant an amalgam of two different kinds of suggestion (the red man and the Greek) seems to imply its lovable mixture of old-fashioned gentility with our modern pang. No-where have I had the happiness to meet such beautiful old ladies, ladies whom one adored at sight and who almost made one wish one might have been young fifty years ago. Could one forget, then, that it was in Indiana that Owen founded his New Harmony when all the world was young? Could one forget that so many poets have found in Indiana glades and valleys a sort of Theocritus voice of pastoral music? There was a perambulating supper held in the statuary hall of

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a big art museum. Underneath a huge figure of a horse, as big as the Trojan quadruped, tall candles burned on a long table and people in evening dress moved about with salad and coffee. There was a gentleman there who knew Austin Dobson by heart. I don't quite see how to convey what is in my mind, but one had a feeling that these gracious people had kept more closely in touch with the beauty of the past than many of our seaboard wits. It was at Bloomington that I heard the liveliest praise of Tennyson that I have lately encountered; and in a second-hand store in Indianapolis I found Fitzgerald's "Euphranor," which I had long hunted in vain in New York. This second-hand bookshop, incidentally, is conducted with Cromwellian rigour: the proprietor refuses admission to any mere browser, and ejects the customer who does not know exactly what book he wants.

Of course, it is absurd to try, on a basis of a few days' skirmish, to set down any memoranda of a way of living. We none of us know what civilization means, or where it is headed; even the great express trains (with half-a dozen new dictionaries in the club and observation cars to help the passengers solve their cross-word puzzles) utter a voice of strangely uncertain melancholy and defiance. But there are pictures in my mind that seem typical of that city's just and serene temper. On the front door of the Indianapolis Public Library you read the words "Friendly Books Welcome You." I think the delightful librarian was a little shocked when I ventured that all books are not friendly: for some of them indeed are dangerous and savage. But no books

Little Journeys

could be as friendly as are the Indianapolis themselves. There was an evening when a dozen or more of us sat round the fire and played Twenty Questions and charades and Intelligence Tests. I think it would have been hard to find, that particular evening, a more innocently hilarious gathering anywhere. In the Intelligence Test the visitor (he might as well admit it) came far down the list of scores. Indianapolis, as befits her reputation as a midwestern Athens, keeps nibbling away at culture. It pleases me to think that one charming lady I met is to read, this week, a paper on Rhythm at her club; and Frank Wicks's Unitarian Church is having an evening with Francis Thompson. That church, which is one of the most genuinely inspiring places I have ever seen, has almost the atmosphere of a living room in an old English country house. There is a smoking room for men in the basement, and the windows, instead of haloed saints, are stained with a design representing the foliage of the Tree Ygdrasil. They sing hymns as though they really meant them, and it is as though the company met for a house-party with God. I remember the phrase "the heavenly host."

In this church I heard the soloist singing "I will lift up mine eyes to the hills," and wondered—a little irreverently—what hills? for I hadn't seen any thereabouts. But then Percy Beach, the indefatigable bookseller, drove me over to Bloomington and we saw a lovely rolling country with bronze valleys and hillsides, a cardinal bird flashing like a song escaped from some anthology, and more of those lively russet-coloured

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pigs. In the big courthouse square at Martinsville a buggy and a white horse were standing in the rain. But, greatest thrill of all, the first thing we saw in Bloomington was a poster announcing a Grand Old Time Fiddlers' Contest. "Sew Your Buttons on Tight and Prepare to Laugh." The Grand Capital Prize was to be "Choice of \$25 Suit or Overcoat to Fit." And all the stores seemed to be offering special prizes. Faris Bros., meat market, "1 strip of Bacon to fiddler playing Saint Patrick's Day in the Morning, best." Fred W. Rumble "1 gallon red pitted cherries to best fiddler playing Money Musk." College Ave. Motor Co. "1 gallon can Veedol Oil to best fiddler keeping time with his feet." Walk-Over Boot Shop "1 pair woolen hose to best jews harp player." Uncle John's Cabin "2 pumpkin pies to fiddler playing Listen to the Mocking Bird." Siscoe Bros. "1 lady hair cut to longest bobbed hair girl contestant." Lem Howard "1 30 x 3½ tube to fiddler coming the farthest in a car." Fun in Big Bunches; Doors open at 7:00 P. M., says the bill, and "Explosion Takes Place at 8:00 P. M." Meredith Nicholson tells us in "The Hoosiers" that these fiddling contests were an old Indiana institution, but apparently they are rare nowadays. The manager of the theatre told me that he did not expect many of the college students to be interested in it; but I feel sure that it must have been an occasion as full of the real juices of life as the Cotter's Saturday Night.

The students of Indiana University—if their most intellectual review can be trusted—hanker for more cerebral explosions. "We need," cries an editorial,

Little Journeys

“for either a year’s residence or a series of lectures, the kind of gigantic thinker who would be kicked out of most colleges—a James Harvey Robinson, a Meiklejohn, a Bertrand Russell, a Lewisohn, or a Havelock Ellis.” Unterrified youths, they demand (in italics) “*a supreme artist in the realm of ideas.*”

It would be interesting to ponder a little about this. The chief embarrassment of college life is not too few ideas, but too many: Joseph Conrad has insisted that the world as we know it rests on some very old and simple notions; myself I think (again I gather my evidence chiefly from the undergraduate magazines I pored over in the train) that some of our friends have been painfully unsettled by biting off a whole meal of ideas at once. The winged Eros, for instance, seems to be riding them with a cruel spur. When they are just a little older they will be more cautious before deliberately encountering an idea, alone in a dark night. Before you invite a Gigantic Thinker into your family circle it may be well to consider whether you have earned him. If only those who have been ejected from other colleges will do, Shelley and Thoreau will give one enough to sharpen the teeth. I cannot quite believe that the undergraduate epoch is a ripe one for settling all the controversies of current argument. Perhaps at college is the time to enjoy a little innocent tranquillity.



IN ITALICS

I SHALL make a botch of what I'm about to say, because I fear the vibration that is in my mind is not quite conveyable. But anyhow, the rain sopping on the little balcony outside my window, and the look-off over Manhattan's cliffs, and the card here beside me, all make the attempt irresistible.

I have just discovered Italy. I know that in the eyes of cultivated readers I am going to be ridiculous; but that doesn't matter. I'll be honest with you. Since a certain rainy day in the summer of 1912—a day when it rained just as it is raining now, and I sat in a hotel in Basel and decided it was too wet to bicycle over the Alps—I had said to myself (subconsciously, not aloud, where I could be overheard) that I could get along without Italy. I said to myself that there

In Italics

were already too many things in the world to be thought about, and that I'd have to sacrifice some of them. I had America to think about, and England, and Germany, and France; and then, later on, getting married and earning a living and raising a family; and I fell in love with Manhattan, and (in a kind of shame-faced way) I said to myself that the new Cunard Building was probably a perfectly adequate substitute for Italy. . . .

And then to-day, coming into the office quite unsuspecting any staggering blow, there was that postcard on A. L.'s desk.

It's no use trying to describe that card to you, though I'll tell you enough so that you can identify it. Underneath the picture is written FIRENZE, Cappella Riccardi—Viaggio dei Magi—Un Cavaliere—Dettagli—Benozzo Gozzoli. The picture is of a young fellow in a white embroidered cloak, with a crown and long curly hair, riding on a white horse. He is accompanied by spearmen. In the background is a very consciously sculpturesque rocky hillside, a man galloping on horseback with lifted spear, and a couple of those very capersome greyhounds loved by Renaissance artists. These are pursuing the hindquarters of a flitting quadruped who has very nearly escaped, for his front half has got right off the postcard. If the man on horseback doesn't hurl his spear quickly the venison will get away. The white horse on which the protagonist is riding is (as they say in art catalogues) richly caparisoned; he is lifting his right front knee with the jolliest enthusiasm and pride; under his belly is visible

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another dog, of a quite mongrellish sort, who (this is only our guess) has attached himself to the procession on his own hook and is enjoying himself greatly. The pricker of the rider's spur comes just over our mongrel's head and looks like a star honouring him.

Now this, I am painfully aware, gives no impression at all of the picture. And indeed, if the loveliness of the scene were transmissible in words, why should Benozzo Gozzoli have painted it? I only mention these details in order to enable connoisseurs of these matters to identify the thing and give them the pleasure of smiling at my simplicity. A. L., I learned, keeps this card on her desk to remind her that "beyond the Alps lies Italy." And I have borrowed it from her for a day or so until I can find some art dealer who can sell me a small photo of the thing.

For if this is what Italy means, I said to myself as I went through the curious adventures of a rainy day among those downtown cliffs—which included lunching with a pensive mandarin beside a window on the thirty-eighth floor and looking off at pyramids and pinnacles whorled in sifting mist and rain while we plotted a little innocent sorcery together—if this is what Italy means, it is high time that (in the charming phrase of the land) I "met up" with her. Of course it is true that I had once before, lunching aboard the steamship *Giulio Cesare* and tasting *asti spumante*, had a vague suspicion that Italy and I would get on well together. But, remembering my disappointment on that wet day in Basel, I had always said sternly, Nò, I can get along without her. Well, a wet day divided us; now a wet

In Italics

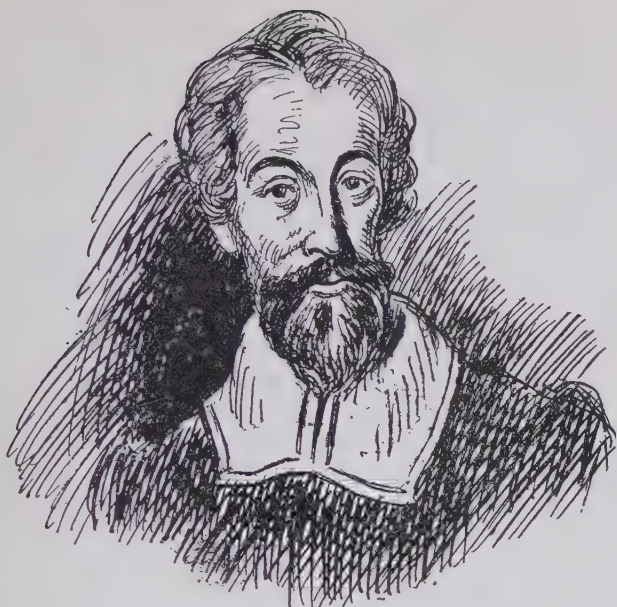
day has brought us together again. Then (how divine is chance!) in came Hugh Western, the Chicago sonneteer. Hugh is a student of Italian art; I broached my naïf excitement to him and showed him the postal card. When he saw it, a flash—like a flicker of spiritual lightning—went over his serene, well-bred features. That was enough. Gozzoli, evidently, was an old friend of his. And if Gozzoli could kindle that look of understanding on the face of a Chicago sonneteer, then, by heaven, Gozzoli is the man for me. Look here, I said to A. L., I'm going to write a letter to this fellow Gozzoli. She didn't quite perceive, and began to explain that Gozzoli . . . Never mind, I said, I'm going to write him a letter. And one of these days I shall.

The youth, the glamour, the enchantment, the shining witness of life as it needs must be lived, emanate from that painting so strongly as to change and fortify the whole current of a man's day. That white horse with its gallant rider—one of the Medicis, A. L. told me—moved invisibly before me all day. I trod in his company. I was the yellow dog that joined the parade; there I was, under his horse's belly, but the star-point of his spur glistened over my humble head. And even here in this cruel and magnificent city, I said to myself, life can yet be made noble and proud by art. A. L. begged me to get hold of some books and read up about the Medicis and Gozzoli; but I don't believe I want to. I prefer to imagine them, until I can lay eye upon the painting itself. A mural, she said. One of those things they paint on walls, I suppose, to prove that there are no walls.

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I wish Benozzo Gozzoli could have seen the view I see now as I am typing this. The thousand golden panes of the Hudson Terminal, the Tel and Tel, and the lesser buildings between, shining through the dusk and wet; the dark little chapel and graveyard below; the winged statue dim against the heavy grey sky. Bless him, the man who did that horse's mild proud eye and curly nostril, the petulant, snobbish, and yet almost girlishly lovely face of young De Medici, Esq., the man who knew how to give those spears just the right angle of slant and the mongrel dog exactly his correct simper of idiotic fool satisfaction—that man would have known what to do about Downtown Manhattan at night. For what are we to do about it? How are we, in this burning and maddening civilization, to recapture that almost insolent glory of artistic fecundity? How shall we “like pelicans from sore-tweaked bosoms feather a nest for some great egg of song”?

That evening I broke the law.



EVERY TUESDAY

EVERY Tuesday," wrote John Donne in one of his weekly letters to his friend Goodyer, "I make account that I turn a great hour-glass, and consider that a weeks life is run out since I writ. But if I aske my self what I have done in the last watch, or would do in the next, I can say nothing; if I say that I have passed it without hurting any, so may the Spider in my window."

And this came to me with a shock (it is the splen-

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dour of Donne that almost everything he wrote comes to you with a crash of recognition) because it was precisely my own case. For it is Tuesday evening that I had set aside in my budget of Time for writing the weekly *Bowling Green*. Though I never manage to get at it until Wednesday forenoon, just before the printer is expecting his copy. Tuesday evening, when one knows that the *Green* is debit, so becomes the most fertile of the week for something else. It becomes the best of Shroves.

The revival of interest in Donne, gathering undercurrent for several years, now is unquestionable. Two new books about him, this winter alone; and in "Elizabeth's" just-published novel, "Love," I find one of her characters busy reading Donne and hankering to talk about him. In such brilliant poets as Elinor Wylie and John Crowe Ransom I seem to observe a voice that the Dean would have understood. It is plain that there is something in Donne that speaks to our present time.

I am an incapable porter of such explosive baggage as John Donne's writings. A little flash of him goes me a long way. Even books about him carry the same difficult voltage, so that I dip into them rather than ponder through. But in Hugh Fausset's "John Donne: A Study in Discord," though I have not traversed it all, I found suggestions that led me toward private analogies valuable to myself. Mr. Fausset, in his lively excitement about Donne, wanders into some phrases that struck me as indiscreet (e.g., "the rhythm of sense plays a costive counterpoint upon the fluid rhythm of

Every Tuesday

sound")—but a man can hardly dig deeply into Donne without becoming a bit arrant. The important thing is that Mr. Fausset does convey the sense that in Donne's pages "a great prince in prison lies." I always think of Donne, in his ecclesiastic robes, as Bagheera the black panther—beautiful in eloquence and latent ferocity; and carrying, under his dark fur, the bare callous of the old chain—the king's palace at Oodeypore. A "baffled centaur" is Mr. Fausset's happy description of him at one angle of his life.

Mr. Fausset thrillingly enumerates Donne's P's and Q's—mostly P's, as his account is quartered into The Pagan, The Penitent, The Pensioner, The Preacher. Of the Pagan label (I must look up that word: didn't it mean, originally, only a suburbanite—a commuter?) I think Donne would have relished William James's reply: "Don't cail me a pagan: it sounds too sectarian." For there was all Heaven and hell in him, and a heat that dissolves the gum on any paper *affiche*. Mr. Fausset gloriously quotes, as description of Donne's own way with a quill, his wildly humorous account of the literary style of the Holy Ghost:

The Holy Ghost is an eloquent Author, a vehement, and an abundant Author, but yet not luxuriant; he is far from a penurious, but as far from a superfluous style too.

Donne was a fountain filled with blood and ink. The only man who ever lived, perhaps, who could have written us an Old Testament measurably substitutional for the Jacobite, had that been lost. Give us a modern

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Donne and we will listen to these 20th century versions of the Bible. No lesser maniac will serve.

There was something Spanish in him. Mr. Fausset rather quaintly ascribes his sensuality to his Welsh blood; but his interest in Spain, from his childhood on, seems significant. Certainly there is something suggestive in the old legend—I don't know how old it may be; I invented it this minute—that Spain is the country where God lives. He lives there because He daren't turn His back on it; it is the weakest link in his chain of beads; there, if anywhere, He and the Demiurge will eventually "have it out." The most eloquent of our modern Satanophils have had a pinch of Iberia in them. At any rate Donne, like any sagacious Freudian, showed his passionate interest in Spain by going to war on her, in naval expeditions. That he was heartily seasick we know from his use of nauseous metaphor in later verse. But there was a Spain in his heart, and a Grand Inquisitor.

He is as modern, I think, as Sherwood Anderson; in fact, Mr. Anderson's washing-machine manufacturer—whom Mr. Anderson's fine imagination has long since transcended; for obvious reasons I do not say outstripped—would have found much in common with Donne's frenzies. But even in his agonized third decade, Donne retained the redeeming buoyancy familiar to washing machines. He was the Ninety and Nine of the hymn, and also the Forty Four One Hundredths. He floated. It is about all we can say.

Perhaps one reason why Donne is so inscrutably familiar, so couth and canny to our present generation

Every Tuesday

of vipers, is that he did succeed in bruising the serpent with his heel. He learned, or almost we might say invented, the stunning truth that Man, the experimental artist, makes his greatest success when he plays over the head of his audience. Man's audience, of course, is Nature; and Nature, like any other audience, likes to feel that she is being given a Message; something that she (as they say at the ladies' clubs) "can take away with her." If you sing Mammy madrigals to her, she fills the house with automatic applause; but when you give her (as Donne did, from the pulpit of St. Paul's) the thrill of insane poetry, she listens in that uneasy awe and silence that is her best tribute to man.

I don't quite understand what Mr. Fausset means when he says that Donne "was neither a graceful nor a witty correspondent." To my taste his letters are the indivisible election of wit and grace. Mr. Charles E. Merrill edited some years ago the "Letters to Several Persons of Honour." In there, together with much more stately matter, you will find a little series of letters "To the worthiest Lady Mrs. Bridget White." They make me perfectly understand the Dean's skill with ladies. Apparently Mistress Bridget, who was only in her teens, was not very punctual in reply. After several unanswered sorties Donne writes:

MADAME,

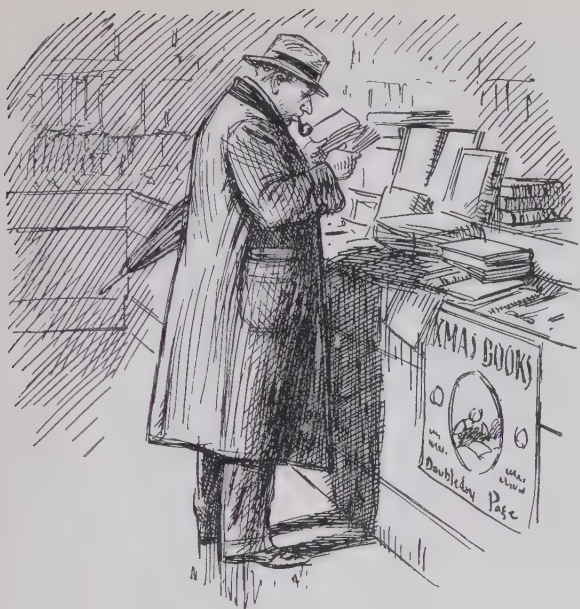
I have but small comfort in this letter; the messenger comes too easily to me, and I am too sure that the letter shall be delivered. All adventures towards you should be of more difficulty and hazard. But perchance I need not lament this; it may be so many of my letters are

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lost already that it is time that one should come, like *Jobs* servant, to bring word that the rest were lost. If you have had more before, this comes to aske how they were received; and if you have had none, it comes to try how they should have been received. It comes to you like a bashfull servant, who, though he have an extreme desire to put himself in your presence, yet hath not much to say when he is come. . . . Your going away hath made *London* a dead carkasse. A Tearn and a Court do a little spice and embalme it, and keep it from putrefaction, but the soul went away in you: and I think the onley reason why the plague is somewhat slackned is because the place is dead already, and no body left worth the killing.

Your humblest and affectionatest servant
J. D.

Surely no woman could resist this. Nor could any God resist Donne's sermons.



BERTHA AND HER POTTAGE

OF COURSE there must have been others also for whom the word *Brooklyn* has always been a grammar and a spell. Probably it was Walt Whitman who long ago cast a magic over that name, so that not Stratford, Stoke Poges, Weimar, Valley Forge, Walden—not even Cockeysville, Md., where the Sherwood rye used to be distilled—none of the traditional shrines had a livelier music in my skull. Since then some of the most unawaited excitements have transpired for

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me in that borough which Mr. Lawton Mackall ungallantly called the butt end of Long Island. And my actual entry into Brooklyn is demurely associated with what I thought was the discovery of the amazing literary merit of Bertha M. Clay. (I wonder what the M. stood for?)

It was a day, then, much like this; a drowsy forenoon of early spring; and calm Brooklyn byways whose names I have forgotten, perhaps they had none, lay mild and yellow. I had been sent by a publishing house to collect information, for publicity purposes, about one of its authors who had died. The author (I can see very plainly the picture of him we used again and again—it was the only one we had—in our broadsheets sent out to the press; his moustache was finely waxed) was an Englishman, but he had a kinsman who lived in Brooklyn. From this kinsman, a veterinary surgeon, I was to glean some biographical details. It is a bit vague in my mind, but I remember that near the house was a stable or some sort of quadruped dispensary and the doctor and I sat in a pleasant whiff of strong nostra and horse. There was a glass of beer somewhere in the picture, very cool and pleasant beer, blonde like so much of Brooklyn's charm, and in the conversation I learned that the vanished author had been one of those who wrote the novels signed with the great name of Bertha M. Clay.

This may or may not have been exact; but young men in the publicity professions are not gruesomely concerned with doctrines on the fallibility of human transmission. In any case it was a good "item" and

Bertha and Her Pottage

I knew that my boss would be pleased. And I resolved to make the acquaintance of Miss Clay's works.

This was not immediately easy, but one day I found myself in the neighbourhood of Ninth Avenue and Twenty-eighth Street (Manhattan). This time I believe I was on some errand for the editor of the *Garden Magazine*, something to do with a flower show, and the wholesale florists were along West Twenty-eighth. You have no idea, incidentally, how many quaint errands are devised to keep active and alert the young apprentices of the publishing business. In a stationery shop on Ninth Avenue I found a fine display of Bertha Clays. I bought one, perhaps "The Shadow of a Sin" or "Thrown on the World," though I admit that Charles Garvice and Charlotte Braeme had more skill in titles. Why didn't I buy "Neither Maid, Wife, nor Widow"? The title has haunted me ever since. For the conclusion was irresistible, she must have been a Cartesian, as Mr. Clem Hawley would say. In that region there is a park, whose name escapes me; and there I sat on a bench reading my first Bertha Clay. I rapidly came to the conclusion that it was dull twaddle and left it on the seat.

We now skip several years. One evening, in a ten-cent store in Hempstead, L. I., I found a lot more Bertha Clays and determined to have another try. The volume I chose, at random, was "A Dead Heart"; The Arthur Westbrook Company, Cleveland, U. S.A., publishers; postage stamps taken the same as money. "A Dead Heart" was there, sure enough, but it was followed by another tale printed in much larger type,

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and I tackled the second one first. By the time I had read three or four paragraphs I got up from the couch in excitement. I've done Bertha an injustice, I said. There's something to her after all. Why, she's kidding them!

The story was about a young Scot, a graduate in theology and logic (only a Scot could graduate in both these simultaneously) who went to London to look for a job. He wanted to be private secretary to a member of the Cabinet and "if time permitted he proposed writing for the press." He says good-bye to his Scotch sweetheart. "Andrew did not open the door for her, for he was a Scotch graduate. Besides, she might one day be his wife." The girl is briefly described. "Clarrie was beautiful and all that." Their parting:

Andrew stooped and kissed her upturned face.

"If a herring and a half," he said anxiously, "cost three halfpence, how many will you get for elevenpence?"

Clarrie was mute.

With growing enthusiasm I continued. Andrew, the hero, goes to London.

It was the first time he had set foot in England, and he naturally thought of Bannockburn.

Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain were too busy to see him, and he became embittered. He tried journalism:

He sent one of the finest things that was ever written on the Ontology of Being to paper after paper, and it

Bertha and Her Pottage

was never used. He threatened the *Times* with legal proceedings if it did not return the manuscript.

The *Standard* sent him somebody else's manuscript, and seemed to think it would do as well.

A certain amazement was taking hold of me as I scoured through these witty pages. Good heavens, here was Bertha Clay, whom I had regarded as a mere caterer of plum duff, turning off this graceful and high-brow burlesque. I felt I owed Bertha an apology.

Andrew was reduced to rereading his testimonials for consolation. He had a sheaf of them, from the Rev. Peter Mackay of Dundee and many other Scottish logicians and divines:

Had you met him in the Strand conning them over, you might have taken him for an actor. He had a yearning to stop strangers in the streets and try a testimonial's effect on them.

He had two pounds with him when he came to London, and in a month they had almost gone.

He took to writing obits:

When the newspaper placards announced the serious illness of a distinguished man, he made up characteristic anecdotes about his childhood, his reputation at school, his first love, and sent them, as the reminiscences of a friend, to the great London dailies. These were the only things of his they used. As often as not, the invalid got better, and then Andrew went without a dinner.

In his despair our Andrew joins the S. D. W. S. P.—the Society for Doing Without Some People—and earns a modest living by helping to assassinate public

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figures who have proved wearisome to the members of this excellent club. The only personages exempt from possible removal are those who have been elected honorary members. The first man of any note that Andrew dispatched with his own hands was "*Punch's* favourite artist on Scotch matters." He was on the track of the man who signs himself *Paterfamilias* in letters to the *Times*. To his great pleasure he learned that "none of these American preachers who come over to this country are honorary members."

Well, as you see, by this time I felt it was too good to be true. I was carrying Bertha Clay round with me and expounding her as an unappreciated satirist. I went in to see a connoisseur of such matters. "Have you ever read Bertha Clay?" I asked. "She's immense." I read him some of it.

"What's it called?" he asked.

"It's called 'Better Dead,' it's the second story in this book 'A Dead Heart.' The great thing about Bertha seems to be her versatility. It's totally different from the first story."

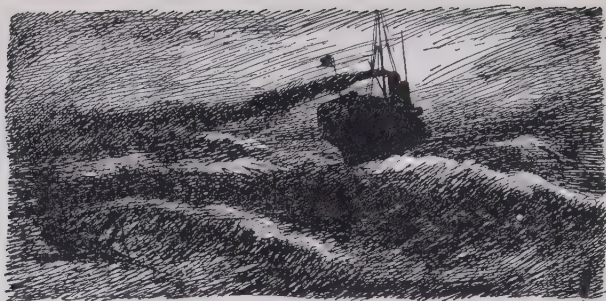
"Bertha Clay!" he shouted. "'Better Dead'? Why, you fathead, do you know what that is? It's Barrie's first book, published in '88. This is probably the first American edition, pirated. Darned valuable as a curiosity. Can you get me a copy?"

I went back to the ten-cent store. The counter where Bertha had reigned was devoted to Easter eggs.

"I'm sorry," said the young woman, "they were taken off sale last week. There's not much call for literature here."

Bertha and Her Pottage

But I often wonder what the readers of "A Dead Heart" can possibly make of that little skit of Barrie's when they find it masquerading under the name of Bertha M. Clay. And in the same volume, at the very end (just before the advertisement of "Napoleon's Oraculum"), you'll find a yarn called "My Own True Ghost Story," written by a young man in Allahabad. But that also goes in as one of Bertha's. I begin to understand why so many people, including the Arthur Westbrook Company, regard Bertha as a great writer.



STORMS AND CALMS

EVERY now and then there bobs up—not undiscouraged by the ingenious publishers—some argument as to the order in which the reader should “approach” Conrad’s works. In a recent symposium “20 Famous Critics Tell Readers How To Start Reading Joseph Conrad’s Books.” To a publisher all critics are famous, just as in the dark all cats are grey. But the interesting thing to me is to observe the majority by which these old salted Conrad shellbacks advise the apprentice to begin with what Conrad himself called his “storm pieces”—“Youth,” “Typhoon,” “The Nigger.” It reminds me that Shakespeare’s storm piece, “The Tempest,” is always put first in his collected editions. I wonder why?

I am not deposing any thesis; I am merely wondering. I suppose the most rational way of reading any man’s work, and the most arduous, is in the chronology of its writing; so can you trace the course of his mind. But only serious students are likely to do that; most readers

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are more haphazard. And I have an affectionate disrespect for those who will allow their dealings with so fascinating an author as Conrad to be too much dictated by what critics suggest.

I wonder, though, whether Conrad did not have a very particular tenderness for what he has called his "calm pieces"; and whether, for many readers (who find hurricane and breaching seas genuine vertigo to soft head and stomach), "Twixt Land and Sea" and "The Shadow Line" are not a more tactful beginning? Of course, it is easier to admire storm pieces than calms; perhaps also easier to write them (I am not asserting; only wondering; nothing great is easy to write, I have been told). But I am often faintly surprised that in talk about Conrad one hears so little of "The Shadow Line" and the three tales in "Twixt Land and Sea." In the case of a man like Conrad I think you have to watch him carefully for his most significant utterances; and when he says casually in the preface to "The Shadow Line," "I admit this to be a fairly complex piece of work," perhaps he covertly means, "This is a devil of a big thing if you have the wit to discern it." At any rate, it *is* a devil of a big thing; and if one considers the time when it was written (the closing months of that gruesome year 1916) it takes place as one of the most heroic achievements in a not easy life. In that story there is a sudden picture of a seaman at the ship's wheel at night, his brown hands on the spokes lit up in the darkness by the glow of the binnacle. I will not spoil your pleasure in the picture by insisting on the symbolism that Conrad intended; he explains

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it himself in the tale; and perhaps one of his weaknesses was that of too often explaining symbolism. But the bronze-shining hands on that shadowy wheel, the ship becalmed, the anxious question "Won't she answer the helm at all?"—these are matters for as careful meditation as the Chinese coolies battered to and fro in the hold of the *Nan-Shan*. When Conrad gave "The Shadow Line" its subtitle, "A Confession," when he hoisted on its halliards that quotation from Baudelaire, he was doing something that deserves watching.

It is foolish of me to write about Conrad; and certainly I should never try to prejudice readers in favour of trying one special book before another. There are several Conrads that I have never read myself; perhaps I never shall. Up to the present I have as much of him under hatches as I can properly stow. I have, I think, much the same feeling that he had when he came up New York harbour in the *Tuscania*. After a long and very careful study of that skyline he retreated to the port wing of Captain Bone's bridge and averted his eyes. He had had all he could carry.

But, since none of the present symposiarchs seem to have mentioned them, I can't help saying a word about the extraordinary stories in "Twixt Land and Sea." "The Secret Sharer," is it a magnificent allegory of the horrors of man's duality? Of course, it doesn't matter whether you believe it is or not; like all great fables the suggestion is so implicit that as soon as you try to define it you destroy it. There indeed is the trouble to which all writers of fable are victim: when you ask them exactly what they mean, you

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murder them. If the "moral" of the thing can be explained, it is vanished. It can only be felt. Take the case of another story in the same book, "A Smile of Fortune." There is some colossal irony lurking in the thing; but after perhaps half a dozen readings in the past ten years, I would not venture to graph it. Is Jacobus, the thick-lipped ship chandler, offered to us as a veiled hero or as a scoundrel eager to traffic in the allure of his bastard daughter? And the girl herself, can you tell me any more wretchedly pitiable prisoner, yet how her terror and slattern beauty and potential vitality haunt us from those dead pages. What does it all simmer down to in the end? A deal in potatoes—the potatoes that Jacobus "paraded" (glorious word!) on the table. Any one who would ask what that story "means" is absurd. It means just what to-day means, and yesterday, and a week from next Thursday.

I imagine (I'm only wondering, not asserting) that perhaps the men best fitted to relish Conrad, the men who have known something of the life he describes and are also brooders on the interwoven toe and heel of destiny, are most likely to turn to his "calm pieces" for that enveloping haze of significance which is his greatest gift. An extraordinary duplicity of meaning shimmers in those tales; the slightest movement becomes heavy ("fraught," the reviewers would say) with omen. It is in such stories that he recurs to his favourite theme of the great security of that old sea life as compared with the unrest and fever of the land. Happy, happy man, who through the most difficult years of manhood could mature himself in that hard

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and mannerly calling—"that untempted life presenting no disquieting problems, invested with an elementary moral beauty by the absolute straightforwardness of its appeal and by the singleness of its purpose." Exempt from false sophistication and ethical jugglery, exempt from cultivated palaver, he was free to deepen himself in that beautiful naïveté which all great poets must have. He became, one thinks, almost as naïf as Keats or Shakespeare, with a heart as open to moral simplicities, to honest and ironic sentiment, to simple humours that could even make their mirth over a pair of whiskers. Then, like the secret sharer, he "lowered himself into the water to take his punishment: a free man, a proud swimmer striking out for a new destiny."

So I am wondering. I am wondering whether there isn't something in (for example) "The Shadow Line" that makes even "Typhoon" or "Youth"—yes, even "Heart of Darkness"—seem a trifle melodramatic? These great things, and heaven knows they *are* great, are so precisely what the literary critics *would* most admire. But somehow, hidden away between the lines, I feel more of the essential agony in "The Shadow Line" and "The Secret Sharer." I haven't even mentioned "Freya," the third story in "'Twixt Land and Sea"—that desolately tragic tale that tells (if you choose to interpret it so) what happens to beautiful things when they run up against "authorities." These are all calm-water stories, laid in the luxurious Eastern sunshine that (Conrad suggests) has more psychic corruption than the fiercest northern gale. It is when becalmed that the sailor has time to think.



THE CREATIVE LIFE

AFTER reading "The Dance of Life"* once, I thought: how agreeable to sit down and write copiously about it. After reading it twice, a more decent humility prevails. To "review" Mr. Ellis's fertile and fructuating book would be as impossible as to review life itself. For it speaks to those interior questionings and honesties where the happiest wisdom is silence. Yet, for an action to be comely (Mr. Ellis somewhere suggests) it need only be fitting to its particular relationships at its particular moment. The relation that has grown up between this book and myself is such that I would feel cowardly not to testify. And perhaps the man who has crowned his old age by this noble résumé of a life's thinkings would find no impropriety in a salute from a young ignoramus

*"The Dance of Life," by Havelock Ellis, Houghton Mifflin Co.

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desperately but sincerely groping for those liberations of spirit that help to make life artful. It is by its echo in young and undisciplined hearts that Mr. Ellis's book will prove its virtue.

To make life artful. . . . It is living itself considered as an art that is the acorn of Mr. Ellis's foliage. Indeed, one has long suspected that the artists—using the word in no narrow sense—inkle truest happiness, for they have discarded (unconsciously, for the most part) the merely conventual and nonessential. Without the peace, the humility, the rigorous aversions, the charitable humours which we can learn from them, there is ill chance of our becoming more than mere botchers at this greatest of skills. Disobedience to the artistic instinct of the soul, its troubled but divinely judicious intuition of harmonies, is the most cruelly punished of human errors.

The dance of life! I have feared that to modern connotation Mr. Ellis's title may sound misleading: for the word *dance* has acquired slipshod and rowdy suggestions. The rhythms and measures he divines are more majestic and more obscure, more truly jocund yet also more tranquil, than those our mind is wont to image. One of the most beautiful things our time has invented is the slowed motion picture: just so we must conceive the pattern of the universe scanned on a scale that makes manifest its exquisite hesitation and pause. The recurring rondo of our joys and follies is a part of it, as much as the sprinkled movements of the sky. I was once one of a group of boys and girls that used to meet, in Oxford, to caper the old English coun-

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try dances. In the rustic figures of "Jenny Pluck Pears" and "Gathering Peascods" and "Up Tails All," in "Dargason" ("or, The New Sedany"), and "Three Meet" ("or, The Pleasures of the Town"), accompanied by those adorable gay and wheedling old musics, we youthfully frolicked in a merriment that was immortally harmless, hale, brimming with utter fun. In some unquestionable way one knew one's self attuned to the full meaning and melody of life. This was play—that is to say, art—at its most innocent best: I have never approached any happiness like it. When I remember the perfected charm and gusto of that jolly sport, whether indoors or on green lawns or damp riverside meadows, I realize what Mr. Ellis means when he suggests the primitive sensibility of the dance as the germ of all thought, all morals. So I beg for faith in the instinct of the true artist. That is sufficient for me: I am a solifidian.

But all advances in thought, as Mr. Ellis summons many testimonies to prove, are assisted by fictions. And this book itself, so full of brave encouragement, is, I daresay, fictive enough. For though he urges us to believe that perhaps the art-instinct is the *primum mobile* of the spirit world (just as some one element may be fundamental in all matter), yet we know ourselves too well to be over-hopeful. Is there any sensitive person who has not found himself continually hampered and thwarted in his justest impulses, calloused by the friction of competing hopes, crazed by the tragedy of needless and meaningless hastes and bickerings, thus tottering an errant course rather than

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proceeding with the clear sobriety of art? Civilization, though it often extorts our reluctant admiration, yet is also maddening. I have seen a New York taxi-driver, spinning his cab round a crowded corner, unconsciously roll his eyes with just the bewildered frenzy of a dog that isn't yet quite certain whether to bite or not. I have ridden in suburban electric trains where the continual crashing of metal doors, jarring of windows, jolting of starts and stops, racing of belated passengers to leap aboard at every station, all combined in a hullabaloo so shocking that unless one retired into a secret core of indifference one would surely go insane. Only too well we know our lives to be absurd and unwholesome; and we seek passionately, impossibly, to be made significant and whole.

These contradictions and paradoxes of life as we know it, Mr. Ellis patiently and generously considers. With the occasional sprinkle of bitterness that is palatable in philosophy, with the nicest simplicity of manner, and (more important still) with an eye cleansed by feasting on the wideness of Time and Space, he takes us through the four great arts that are most urgent to our condition: the art of Thinking, the art of Writing, the art of Religion, the art of Morals. Ever since I first encountered the book, I have wished there were some way of making it compulsory study for parsons. For though it gives little consolation to churches, it has profound energy for those who esteem religion as the noblest form of æsthetic.

The fiery particle will not be put off with quibble or evasion. It is, it *is* important and needful that on

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should at least try to live life as an art, that it should be exempt from pitiable haggings and cowardly surrenders. And Ellis's special charm, perhaps, is that he keeps rediscovering to us those most precious of all secrets—our own thoughts, those we buried, forgot, or fled from in dismay. The notions we were a little leery of, that we folded neatly and hid under a stone while we went bathing in the clear swift stream of life, we here find again and recognize as the most important. His pages on the essential unity of science and art, for example. He insists that they are homoiousian (a word he does not use, but I do, for I love a good rollicking pedantry now and then). Those passages are the richest delight to any one who has been privileged to guess the imaginative poetical spirit that irradiates all genuine scientific inquiry. Everywhere he is on the side of the angels; and while he says very little that is novel or startling to any alert thinker, yet he says quite enough to galvanize many a merchant in intellectual hand-me-down and shoddy. And his substance is charmingly organized and thought out. The chapter on literary art is truism to any intuitive lover of language; yet how admirably and winningly put. Always we find him taking the cudgel against stultifying rule and rigidity, the picayune pettifogging spirit that would construe the text of life as a proof-reader corrects galley slips. In the "Art of Morals," for instance, how eloquently he buttresses every artist's contention (sure to be misunderstood, of course) that to the philosopher there is no such thing as "morality," as vulgarly apprehended; for morality ceases to exist when it becomes

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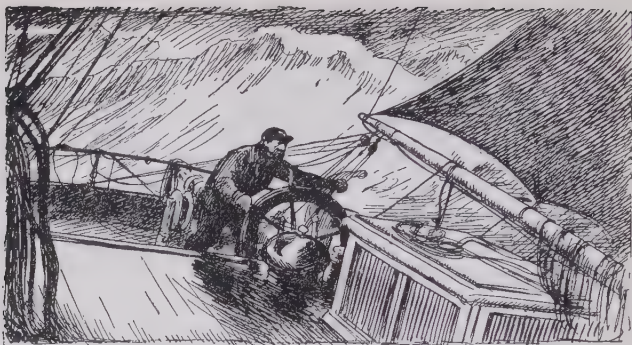
conscious. Morality, of course, is merely what is mannerly and customary: and Mr. Ellis frankly would have us all as "immoral" as Jesus was.

What, then, if we try to lay penpoint upon it, is the cardinal bearing of this great book? I think it is this, that each of us (if capable of thought at all; and he excellently insists that not all are so capable) is an artist creating his own truth from the phenomena life gives him. The kingdom of Heaven is within us indeed, and each must be his own Buddha, his own Christ, his own Leonardo. This dark and pricklesome necessity surely does not imply any relaxing of our imperilled responsibility, rather an all the more stringent devotion to our little ember of artistic conscience. Out of these fantastic intractable materials that life has poured about us we must compose our picture as best we may—like prisoners of war carving cunning toys of corn-cobs and peanut shells and chewing gum. Time—which is, I suppose, the canvas we paint on, the clay we knead—flows fast and faster—so fast, sometimes, we dimly suspect ourselves very close to the place it comes from. Every instant is an emergency, and we are apprenticed to the art of living before we know enough to have any choice. As so often on railroads, the brakeman doesn't call out the names of the stations until after the train has started. By the time we learn where we are going—it sounds very like Nothingness?—it is too late to cancel the ticket.

Any man who writes as plainly as Mr. Ellis of the real issues of life, is certain of a few sniffs and hoots. But he helps us toward the only task worth while, the only

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task that can bring us peace—the attempt to deal not as hucksters, but as poets, with the rough, blazing, infinitely precious fragments of life. He helps us to face the exquisite riddle with greater piety and courage, and to turn our necessity to glorious gain. Perhaps it is not inappropriate to say of his book, as he says of Lange's "History of Materialism" that so moved him years ago, "it can never be forgotten by any one who read it in youth."



POSTSCRIPT TO THE LOG

THAT morning the Nigger was first on deck. Behind Duck Island breakwater, where the *Narcissus* (a 41-foot ketch) had taken shelter the night before, it was quiet, warm, and hazy; but there was a kind of omen in the air. 7 A. M. Bar. 29.64—*light breeze SSW* was the Nigger's entry in the rough log, for he was learning the laconic brevity esteemed in log books. But he mentioned his suspicions of the weather to the Skipper. The latter, by the simple act of putting on his cap, was ready for command: he had turned in all standing after a hard day.

The Nigger lit the fire and put on Charley Noble Senior to speed the draught. In sailing craft, as perhaps I don't need to tell you, the top section of the galley stovepipe, with its lateral vents to keep rain out of the fire and to catch the air at any slant of wind, is traditionally known as Charley Noble. But the

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spare cylinder of pipe, tall and open at the top, put on when a hot stove was needed in a hurry, we had honoured with the name of Noble Sire or Charley Noble Senior. (The two, collectively, were referred to as the Two Noble Kinsmen.) When the Skipper saw Noble Senior put on, his eye always brightened; this meant that victual was toward.

The Nigger would like to persuade himself it was that omen in the air that toughened the jam omelet. Jam omelet had been promised the Skipper for breakfast; the last half-dozen eggs (this was the fifth morning of the *Narcissus's* cruise) had been saved for it. But he knows it was merely that he didn't beat them enough. The omelet was as tough as biltong, which heroes used to eat in Captain Mayne Reid's stories. But it was eaten in much peace: the *Narcissus*, under jib and mizzen, sailed herself gently out into the Sound, while the Skipper kept an eye on the tell-tale compass set beside him on the table.

A wonderful quiet morning, the light air gradually hauling to westward, a hazy pallor all round the horizon. In that widest stretch of Long Island Sound we were soon out of sight of land; no other craft was visible; we rippled softly in a great vacancy made all the more precious by faint foreboding that something was stirring in the far blue hollows of the weather. It grew so surprisingly hot that the Nigger wondered whether some of his warmth wasn't due to sunburn. The Skipper was overhauling gear in the forepeak. "Were you rumbling something down there?" asked the Nigger presently. The Skipper said No; so that al-

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most inapprehensible rolling of weights, that soft shifting of huge volumes of air, must have been thunder. The glass kept pretty steady around 29.63 and .64; the Skipper enhanced the mid-ocean feeling of our shimmering solitude by getting out his sextant and shooting the sun. But a pleasant lethargy circled in our veins; the Skipper did not work out the position, contenting himself by narrating how once, passenger in S. S. *Tuscania* at sea, Captain David Bone had allowed him to take a noon observation from the bridge; but, rattled by the proximity of this famous navigator, the amateur misread his tables. When he presently announced his finding of *Tuscania's* position he had located her somewhere in the placid waters of Lake Sebago, Maine. At midday the *Narcissus* was softly dipping in a lucid calm. To put on some porridge to simmer was all the Nigger could persuade himself to achieve. He even forgot (and now remembers it with chagrin) to clean up the sticky place at the back of the grocery cupboard, where in the heavy rolling of the day before a tall marmalade jar, too loosely wedged, had toppled over and oozed a sirupy juice. Presently came a slant of breeze from NE and land was duly ho'd. This was Herod Point; and the name sounded threatening too.

So passed the warm divisions of early afternoon. A spell of airless silence, a breath of air from SE; another sleepy interim and a puff from ESE: the beguiling comedians of Aeolus seeking to distract their audience's attention from what was really preparing behind the backdrop. Only the boatman's ever-present necessity

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of something to be done kept the two from yielding to the torpor that was heavy in their legs. The Skipper got out his lead line and marked off fathom lengths with scraps of flannel. The Nigger finished a painting job that had been keeping him busy on the cabin roof. The dinghy was lashed a little more firmly to the deck. Both remarked the number of insects that came aboard: a ladybug, a wasp, and two or three other flitting midgets. Instead of blundering about for a moment or so and then winging away, as they usually do a few miles offshore, these creatures seemed disposed to crawl into corners and take cover. The Nigger found the wasp tucking himself into a niche in the very angle of the stem, between the bowsprit and the deck. Surely, he said to himself, this too is a sign of storm. He made sure that the porridge was well anchored on the stove, and sat to write up the log. In the pleasures of that task he was completely absorbed: his pipe was drawing well, the Skipper was ware and watchful at the wheel: for the time being, all portent and presage had vanished from his mind. It was eight minutes past four when the master called down "I think it's really coming." They hastened to get down the mainsail and stow away the painting job which had been drying on the cabin trunk. Just as the thick clouds let loose their rain—at 4:35, when commuters get ready to leave the office and make for the train; for all Long Island thunderstorms are justly calculated to catch the homeward traffic—a little school of porpoises came plunging almost alongside of us. When you see them from the tall deck of a liner you can't

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hear the snorting sneeze they make each time they emerge. They came close by on the starboard side, until we could see their little eyes catch sight of us: they dived under and vanished. Within the next hour, with drenching tattoos of rain, musketry of hail, and lively stripes of lightning, we were almost as wet as they.

Still, though there had been little puffs from all quarters, there had been no real wind. The Skipper by some overtrust of disposition had concluded that the Nigger was prescient in the matter of weather. "Do you feel as though there was going to be a hell of a blow?" he asked, with his customary copiousness of monosyllable. The Nigger, standing with only his head out of the companionway (for why, as he said, should they *both* get wet unnecessarily? and he was pretending to be engrossed at the galley), keeked warily about. True, the barometer had gone down to 29.54; and yet the Nigger, Lord forgive him, did not *feel* as though anything preternatural was brewing. A long, steadily pouring wet night was what he expected. Now, off Mount Misery (which you will find near Port Jefferson on the map) came a flavourous southeastern breeze. It was strong with all the odours of wet pine woods and dripping May earth. Only Long Island, exclaimed these two enthusiasts, could so tincture an air with whiffs of richness. The Nigger, still pondering the problem of getting into the narrow rulings of the logbook as much as possible, asked whether it would be too literary to note 5:50 *Mount Misery abeam. A beaker full of the warm South.* In this fresh and resiny

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current they laid their course West. Thunder and lightning seemed to have gone by. Even, at 6:45, all seeming propitious, they were wondering whether the mainsail might safely be raised again. At midnight, they were reckoning, they ought to make Glen Cove.

"If this one hasn't got wind in it, I never saw any," said the Skipper. His tone brought the Nigger instantly to the companion. In the northwest was a huge white raft of cloud, curiously whorled and voluted over itself, not unlike the downward curve of the water at Niagara's edge. Behind it was dark purple; under it, ink-black. There was just time to sling on an oil-skin coat and stand by the mizzen sheet. When it struck, carrying level shots of rain, this was no mere wind. It was a solid body, moving from somewhere to somewhere else at sixty miles an hour. The purple water was instantly ribbed with crisping parallels of silver, which, as soon as they were high enough, were whipped off in ragged membranes. Down to her lee rail *Narcissus* wallowed. The jibboom snapped: the jib, catching tons of pressure in that sharp angle, might well have gone to ribbons but didn't. Both, though they didn't admit it until later, waited to see the mast go; which would have meant the lee shore of Mount Misery a mile away. Why, was the first thought of the Nigger, as he sat on the weather gunwale up to his hams where the seas were creaming down from forward, Why did he name her *Narcissus*? She's going to do the same thing as Conrad's. I wonder which is more anxious in such moments: to be Skipper at the wheel, with the full responsibility; or to be Nigger

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hanging on to the weather stay, winking sluices of salt from your eyes and waiting to obey whatever orders may come. But, as the Skipper remarked, it can't blow like this very long. It did, though. Half an hour can be a long time. Of course you know that a solid bit of Maine boat-building won't turn turtle; and yet when you crawl into the cabin to look at the barometer after twenty minutes of hurricane, you rather expect her to go Jonesward as soon as you are below. The Nigger hasn't forgotten that barometer reading. It was 29.62. It had turned upward again. Nor did he ever know exactly how the potatoes that had been boiling on the stove got into the coal bin.

As Conrad quoted in his title-page motto for the original *Narcissus*:

My Lord discovered a great deal of love to this ship.



THE TONKA BEAN

THERE is a Great Caliph who lives in a castle by the sea. This Arabian potentate, in the intervals of his manifold affairs, has a specially ingenious form of relaxation. He waves his wand and summons from remote provinces parents who need a brief exemption from family duty. Parents of young children are his hobby: he Collects them, one might say; he installs them in his turreted pavilion; he whispers to them the magic phrase; and then he lights his pipe and watches them enjoy themselves. This Caliph is, one fears, a comfortable fellow. He uses tonka beans to flavour his tobacco. He snuffs the steam of Darjeeling tea as an asthmatic infant inhales Vapo-Cresoline. And, like the tonka bean in his tobacco, so the amusement of watching other people being happy is an aromatic capsule in his existence.

Not to be misunderstood, by the way, I will tell you what are the magic words I alluded to. They are two: *Room Service*. You go to a telephone and say them gently. Shortly afterward high-spirited djinns come brisking in, carrying portable tables. There is a

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flourish of white linen, a musical chiming of silver dish covers, a vapor of hot viands. You sit, easily enough, watching the parallel confusions of the surf under the castle windows. It is not polite to talk with your mouth full, so, for a while, there is small speech.

A great adventure, certainly, for patres and matres familiæ, once a year or so, to flit briefly from the instant discipline of home. But Woman, I believe, relapses even more gently than Man into the felicity of sluggishness. Woman (I wish her luck, by the way) is natively a luxuriating animal. Man, or at any rate Man who has been trained as a commuter, has lost the accomplishment of lying late in the morning. But Woman, within the turning of one night, can placidly revise her whole schedule and snooze as beautifully as a half-tamed leopard. Meanwhile the pensive philosopher goes for a stroll, adding to his private collection of disbelievables and astonishments.

In the vast lobby, downstairs, with its flags and palms and café-au-beaucoup-lait pillars, its charming inverted mushrooms of electricity, he walks dreamily. Above a flight of stairs glimmers a great crystal sphere which has something of a magical hypnotic effect. There are great blocks of very dark green marble—almost black—which recall some story in the Arabian Nights where a number of people were turned, from the trouser-pocket down, into just such polished stone. Elevator boys, not quite so dark as that marble, have also something delightfully fairy-tale about them. They seem to have been translated by Burton. When the Room Service voice asks you over the 'phone,

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"American or European plan?" (always so startling a question, for we can never remember which is which; and Senators have dinned it into us that we must avoid European involvements), I always want to reply, Arabian Plan. That is the plan the office uses, anyhow, with all those Arabic numerals. I shouldn't wonder if the castle has 1001 rooms—or, as Burton would put it, a Thousand Rooms and a Room.

Atlantic City, or at any rate that special slice of it that I have been studying, is a community very truly infused with the spirit of art. To take the matter on its humbler level first, even the sand sculptors who shape Kiwanis and Rotary emblems on the beach, or the Lion of Lucerne, or shipwrecked mariners on a raft, even these craftsmen have a certain proud flash in the eye as they look up to the Boardwalk. Their signs say TO PRAISE I'M DIFFERENTIAL, BUT THE COINS ARE THE ESSENTIAL, or, more indirectly, REMEMBER THE ARTIST. Aye, indeed, let the Artist be Remembered. But a little opportunity to talk about his art is also very precious to him. It may be the borzoi-fancier at the Dog Show, combing out his long-nosed fragile silver-curly hounds before trotting them into the ring for judgment; or the maître-d'hôtel in the dining room, explaining why, of all the posts he has held in many famous houses, this is the one that most enlists his spirit; or (supreme honour) the Chef Himself, in his spotless linen coat and towering cap, showing some specially ornamented jellied meats—a glitteringly marbled thigh of pig on which is a spray of enchanting little flowers cut out of turnips, or a chicken on whose

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fair bosom we find stencilled a robin-redbreast, embossed of miraculously thin shavings of truffle and reddened with paprika. The Chef—it is no other than M. Elie Sivade—is happy to accept your honest homage, and with a touch of genuine pathos regrets that he cannot, now, enjoy himself by executing these details in person. His eye dwells approvingly upon a floral *décor* surmounting some galantine or other—the petals are of dainty spirals of tomato, the centre a thin wafer of lemon peel. But he can no longer, for the dignity of his position, perform those engaging *divertissements* himself. He invents, he directs, he instructs, he supervises: but the actual happy task is done by his apprentices. Perhaps that is one of the sadnesses of rising to the very top in one's art. Let us (we say to ourself) resolutely remain a little lower than the Summit.

The Caliph, as I said before, hides in his tobacco jar a few small black capsules—he calls them tonka beans—which impart to his mixture a pleasing moisture, fragrance, and pervasive gentle savour. At any rate, he says they do: and in matters of taste it is what you believe that matters. And so, like the buried tonka bean, this little secret of pride in his own work refreshes and perfumes the bosom of every genuine artist. This is the very essence of morale, that mysterious exhilaration that employers and college presidents and military commanders labour to inspire. It is just this genius for eliciting personal loyalty that some have thought the Deity, by too distantly absenting Himself from the scene, somewhat underrated. For the Deity must surely have realized that many problems could be

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solved by an effective sublimation of Pride, that most adorable and troublesome quality among His children. For, if you are really proud of belonging to the human race, you will be noblesse-obliged to pay judicious deference to other sharers of that enigmatic honour. We had no intention of dipping into metaphysic: merely intended to say that all along the Boardwalk we see the most agreeable panorama of human jauntiness and self-esteem. Almost unavoidably one resolves to be a little more of an Artist one's self. To keep one's weight down to 180; to be a shade nicer in the gradation of tint between shirt and necktie; to remember that the people who iron trousers and dry-clean hats are also eager to earn a living.

And I have discovered a Bank in which poets ought to keep their accounts. For the sake of the bankers, I would not limit its deposits to the checks received by lyrists; but, joking aside, it deserves a paragraph of its own. It is the new building of the Equitable Trust Company in Atlantic City; a sober, secure, dignified little edifice when first seen from the outside; then, as you study it, unobtrusive charms begin to be apparent. The cunningly rounded window-corners, the marble strips inside the window-frames, the tall columns of contrasting marble at the front door, leading up to a porch ceiling of iridescent tiles which, when lit at night, glitter like peacock feathers—all this is handsomely symbolic of the spirit of a city whose prosperity is based upon gaiety—whose livelihood is liveliness. And inside, if you are a lover of such matters, Mr. Kelly, the delighted cashier, will show you how different

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the building is from the dull heaviness or the equally dull magnificence of most successful banks. First, while the building had seemed not large, you will be amazed at the space and height: at the soft shining of the birch-bark coloured walls, the iron grill-work suggestive of old Spanish treasure chests, the touches of colour and harmony everywhere. Behind the iron railing the open circular door of the vault, in a great ring of glimmering steel, shines like an immense jewel set in dull silver. This door, as lovely and intricate as the works of a watch, is lit up at night by reflected lighting, and people halt on the pavement to peer in and wonder where that lunar-like illumination comes from. A rumour even went about that the door was made of solid silver. All this sort of thing, need we add, is Good Business. Get people wondering, and they'll talk; and talk is the material of prosperity, humanity being what it is.

I should not have paused so long over this bank if it did not beautifully illustrate the point I am clumsily trying to sharpen. The people who work in the Equitable Trust Company of Atlantic City, when they moved into their new building, suddenly found themselves, unexpectedly, amazingly, and by the genius of the architect who had planned and executed their new quarters, living daily among surroundings of beauty. And lo, how they responded, as people almost always will. Their own pride was involved. We asked one of the janitors what he thought about the building. "I'd like to see any one scratch it!" he replied, almost fiercely. The woman who comes in to cook lunch for

The Tonka Bean

the staff in their pretty dining room upstairs hastened to show off to Titania her icebox and ice-making machine which was turning out delicious little transparent cubes. Mr. Kelly, the cashier, related how at board meetings an unwary director who began to tilt back on the hind legs of his chair, as he had always done in the old building, was instantly called to order by his fellows. "Here, you can't do that *now!*" And yet these were the same old severe office armchairs they had always used—but the ingenious architect had scraped off the ugly old mahogany colour and repainted them deliciously in blue and green and little innocent gaieties of colour. And now Mr. Kelly himself, though he wants to put a filing case by his desk, does not dare do so until he has consulted the architect. He is fearful of doing something that won't harmonize with his gracious surroundings. There isn't a thing in the whole building, from lighting fixtures to radiator screens, from window curtains to the racks for deposit slips, that isn't a perfectly planned integral in a harmonious whole, as prettily thought out as a boudoir of Old France. The place is bright and strong and charming as a jewel casket. That is what one means by the spirit of Art. It is a sense of pride in the thing itself, over and above its mere utility.

So we returned to the hotel, and ordered shish kebab. This, as we had been accustomed to it, was merely little gobbets of lamb on a skewer, surrounded by sierras of rice. But these kebabs were divided one from other by small segments of red pepper; and then, nestling between each morsel of meat and the pepper, what do you

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suppose we found? A leaf of mint. There it was again, the memorandum of art. It was the little, unnecessary wizard's touch—like the tonka bean in the tobacco that pervades and promotes the whole. I said to Titania: "I'm going to write a piece about the tonka bean as an emblem of the artistic spirit."



THE MIDDLE COUNTRY ROAD

ONCE I collaborated in writing a novel. In fact, twice; but the first seizure was never read by any one. In the second case it was my partner who planned that the scene should be laid at the eastern end of Long Island; but when the time came for writing that part of the story my colleague had gone abroad. I gave a quite circumstantial description of the extremities of Paumanok; which was meritorious, as I had never seen them. I have often wondered whether my collaborator, whom I will conceal under the name of D—— M——, has ever been there himself. I concealed my ignorance from him; perhaps he his from me.

This is only the preamble. The amble itself is that the other day it occurred to me that it would be an honest thing to find out whether that part of Long

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Island is at all like my description of it. Besides, a new car is a great incentive to travel. So Titania and I got into Dean Swift and went eastward.

I foresee that I am not going to be able to tell you as much as I should like to about the scenery. There are always so many agreeable analogies that flit into the mind and impede narration. In the case of the novel that D—— M—— and I wrote we ruled out all philosophizing; the narrative (if I do have to say it, because the publisher never did) was delightfully rapid. This was because the story was written with the firm intention of selling it to the movies; which has not yet been consummated. The agent complained that it did not have enough Lust at First Sight. He said (he is a well-read man, the agent) that it was neither one Dell nor the other: neither Floyd nor Ethel. He said there was no Pola Negri in our woodpile. If I had the clipping here I believe I would tell you what the *New York Times* said about that story. Why, it was a perfectly splendid notice. If you will turn back to your file of the *Times*, May 25, 1924, you can see. Another reason why the story moved so swiftly was that both D—— M—— and I had determined we would create the most delightful girl in modern fiction; then we both fell in love with her and wanted to write all the bits of dialogue belonging to her; so each one hastened on and on, to get past his allotted section and into the other man's. That was why it only took two and a half years to write the book. The real reason was that we had drawn some advance money from the publisher on the strength of the mere synopsis. Nothing makes a

The Middle Country Road

book so hard to write as having got money for it beforehand. Let this be a warning to publishers.

But, as I began to say, Titania and I set off eastward. The reason why I shall not say much about the scenery is that I didn't really study it in detail. I got the *feeling* of it rather than any precise observation. For driving a new car is a gloriously introspective business. You are too happy listening to the unfamiliar drum of the engine, watching the strange dashboard, learning her ways (I may as well tell you that seven notches below the bead seems to be the best adjustment for the carburetor intake-screw in the case of Dean Swift) to carefully examine the landscape or worry about split infinitives. Then, too, you have a clock on the dashboard, which is a new luxury in my motoring career; it is an eight-day clock, and you may get to thinking, suppose you wind an eight-day clock every Sunday, then once every eight weeks (wouldn't it be?) you should let her go a week without winding, to work off the excess torsion? Titania and I stopped the Dean in a pine wood along the Middle Country Road to argue that out. Driving a new car is very like being young, which is only driving a new mind and body through life. You are likely to be so eagerly absorbed in your own mechanisms that you don't really pay proper attention to the meaning of what is around you. All the time you have the feeling, some day I'll do this again, thoughtfully, and study the significance of it. But suppose you aren't going to have any chance to do it again?

So I had better tell you at once how lovely is the

The Romany Stain

Middle Country Road. The general human habit of keeping to the main highway is a great consolation to those who always hunt out the roads marked second-rate in the maps. So when everyone else, at the romantic hamlet of Smithtown Branch, bears left on the concrete pike to Port Jeff, the Dean (whose garage, by the way, is called the Deanery; and if you're disturbed by the idea of a female Dean you need only think of Bryn Mawr College) the Dean keeps straight on into the strange and barren peace of the Middle Country. I think it is there (the map is not handy as I write) that you reach the hamlet of Coram; but it is not Coram Populo, for all that region is rather desolate. What beautiful little old farmhouses, deserted and crumbling by the way, where lilacs still in the dooryard bloom. And queer, tiny forgotten cemeteries; in one of these a waggon and two white horses were standing; Titania said (I was looking at the oil gauge just then) they were digging up the graves. She remembered the white horses of Rosmersholm. I like to spell it waggon, because (this is the Urchin's pun) every waggon ought to have a geegee.

There was something curiously metaphysical about our little voyage. First the Friends' Meeting House at Jericho. Then West Hills, where Walt was born. Then, as I am telling you, the exquisitely forlorn quality of the Middle Country Road (*medio tutissimus ibis*). At sunset time you come into Riverhead where the friendly and humorous proprietor of the old Griffin House makes you welcome. In the hotel you will find a facsimile of what purports to be a liquor license once

The Middle Country Road

issued to Abraham Lincoln. In the dining room Mary the waitress, with an excellent Long Island twang, announces suddenly over your shoulder, "We have steak, lamb chops, veal cutlet, fried clams, fried eels." And in the pine woods along the bay, at dusk, the whippoorwills are shrilling, like a flexible switch flogged in air.

D—— M—— and I were quite safe in describing the island of our story, because it is private property anyway and small chance of any one checking us up. But the other island in that bay, Shelter Island, is very much as I had imagined it and certainly an enchanting place. The cheerful young ferryman at the South Ferry on Shelter Island had been on the island of our story, and told me of its charms, of its woods full of deer and its steep clay cliffs. He is a student of thunderstorms, too, and told how the tides alter the behaviour of electrical storms in that narrow gut; and how a young farmer in the neighbourhood was killed by lightning recently while taking a bath in a galvanized tub under an electric light fixture.

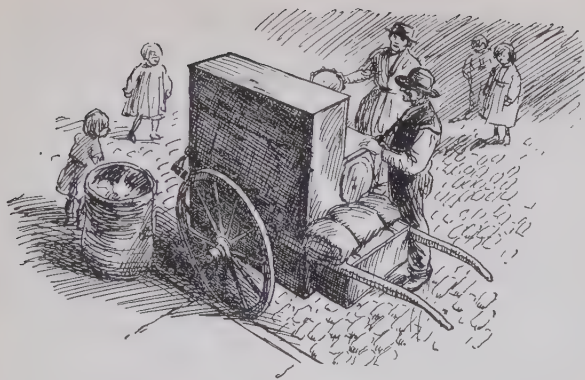
But the real goal of our pilgrimage was Montauk, which was as surprising to me as almost everything is when you see it for yourself. As far as Amagansett the South Shore highway, superb of its kind, is almost distressingly point-device. The Hamptons are all ye'd up: even Uncle Sam lends his approval: I could hardly believe the inscription *Ye Easthampton Post Office*. At Southampton I think my eye caught a sign on Agawam Pond about Not Luring The Swans. That would bar out Leda. The delightful windmills of the Hamp-

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tons have mostly lost their sails: perhaps someone has been tilting at them.

But beyond Amagansett the Dean found herself, in a gathering fog, on a queer undulating way among wild sand dunes and heathy moors. For many miles that strange road twists and thankyoumaams in the desert. Under the cliffs the surf roared in dim vagues of milk and pearl; and when at last we reached the lighthouse and shut off the motor a savage lonely voice came bursting through the fog. It was the siren; an odd name for such a melancholy warning cry. One could not help remembering it was here, along these lonely beaches, that Walt Whitman used to shout Shakespeare at the storm.

Coming home next morning, in the clear sunlight of the Shinnecock Hills, just as we were approaching a big truck, I saw—too late to do anything—a fine big yellow and black turtle crawling out on to the road. I'm afraid that he was going exactly into the path of those great flat wheels. And another omen led me to fear the worst had happened. That afternoon we were spinning gently along the Motor Parkway; which, as the signs remind you, is reserved for Pleasure Vehicles. Behind us came a roaring, a car shot past the Dean at twice our speed. It was a hearse.



THE CONSTANT NYMPH

BEFORE me is a newspaper photograph of her: great ropes taut round her waist and under her armpits; lashed to the wrecking company's derrick like the skipper's daughter on the *Hesperus*, or Andromeda on her rocky jut. She is coming down to-day; and New York University is the only Perseus who has volunteered to rescue this Constant Nymph.

The day Diana came down from the tower of Madison Square Garden something went away from New York. It is foolish to grumble about saying good-bye to anything we love. The Technique of Saying Good-bye is one of the great unwritten poems. But for me she will always leave, like Mr. Markham's cedar tree, a lonesome place against the sky.

The day Diana came down all continued in its usual course. In the slack morning hours people were riding

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in the subway, picking up jettisoned newspapers to pass away the time. The *Berengaria* turned her great nose toward sea. Editors were busy sending back MSS., with courteous letters explaining why the poems were unavailable. One of these editors happened to tell me that he was stiff all over from a day spent in his garden, planting laurel. (Planting laurel! Exactly what an editor should be doing, I thought.) Six-cylinder cars were making that magnificent rich droning hum as they shifted into second speed. (Only a man who is just driving six-cylinders for the first time knows how splendid that sound is. Yes: Dame Quickly has a younger sister: her name is Dean Swift. The new Everyman edition of the "Journal to Stella" is carried in one of her door pockets as a talisman. We hitch our wagon to Stella.) Between the acts of great plays—such as "Rosmersholm"—people talked busily to avert the painful impact of thought. In the Thirty-fourth Street region gross terraces of building stood magnificently in soft blue air. A new anthology of poems was published—Burton Stevenson's "Home Book of Modern Verse." A book so fascinating that in spite of its eleven hundred pages I could not resist toting it around with me all day, to read on the train and in the subway. For, absurdly enough, I felt that the publication of that book was the consolation, the counterpoise, to Diana's come-down. Eros is gone from Piccadilly Circus, Diana is gone from Madison Square, but at least in poetry books the gods still live. No one shall rip them the black spot.

The day Diana came down something went away

The Constant Nymph

from New York. I don't know just what; no one can say. Whatever it was, it could only be suggested in verse. A friend of mine told me that he is taking singing lessons, because, he said, You can say so many things in singing that you couldn't possibly utter in ordinary speech. There never was a truer word. In an anthology like Mr. Stevenson's (a codicil to his fat and famous "Home Book of Verse") you can find out what people are really thinking about. The world has long since agreed that in poetry you may say what you mean; no one is offended at poetry. It is only in prose that you must be wary. It is like the old saying (Joseph Conrad makes a splendidly urbane reference to it somewhere) about one man being able to steal a horse without scandal, whereas another may not even look wistfully at a halter. But it is true (Conrad adds) that some people have a particularly irritating way of gazing at halters. This is true also in the stable of the horse called Pegasus.

The day Diana came down something went away. I suppose that some day I may see her again at New York University, but I would almost rather not. For me she must always live in that particular eddy of sky that hangs above Madison Square. When it has to be done, I can say good-bye with the rest of them. But there's no law against my thinking of the old house on Madison Avenue (gone also) where three young men once lived with causeless merriment and regarded Diana as their patron deity. They would be as chaste and lofty as herself; offensive to their decent minds were the rumours of stag parties associated with the goddess.

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What did she mean to them? Who could say? Perhaps they felt, dumbly, that scheme life as you will, intersperse it with jocular palaver and consoling hurry, there remains above all the fierce principle of beauty, the untamed goddess of the hunt, pursuing the wild animals of desire with her sharp arrow of reason. And yet she never shoots her arrow. Ah, how that bothered those meditative young men! And a later generation of bipeds, the balloon-trouserred squires of N. Y. U., will probably brood the same awkward analogue. What, meanwhile, has become of the winged mischief of Piccadilly Circus? As I remember him he was not aiming a never-to-be-shot-off dart. He was skipping on the very tiptoe of exultant malice: he had actually sped the shaft. As Eros, of course, would have; everyone knows how much more hasty they are on the incontinent of Europe. One could imagine the prickling wand transpiercing someone in that throng; yes, even some hale and fresh-bathed Briton, in silk hat and morning coat, trembling with that naughty fixture in his breast. Or better still: some docile young American, hastening through the Circus, who suddenly found the daintily feathered shaft stuck right through him. How he implored the door-man at the Trocadero to pull it out, and the latter thought him surprisingly tight for so early in the afternoon. How he dodged zigzag through the crowd, to avoid poking his awkward skewer into other people. My advice to that young man would be to hurry to George Santayana and beg him to pluck it out.—Or suppose this had happened to Henry James? Perhaps that is exactly what *did*

The Constant Nymph

happen to Henry James; he had to stand off a bit from the world lest people should see his arrow.—I must look up the legend of St. Sebastian.

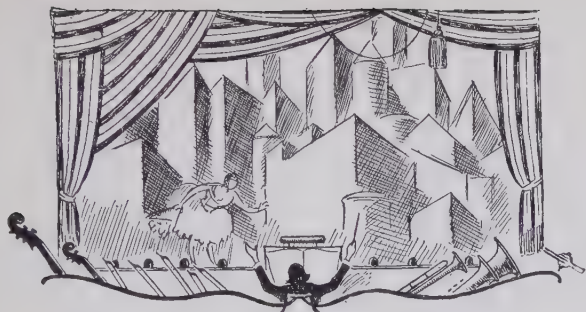
The day Diana came down something went away from New York. Some little shuddering pang of loveliness and loneliness, something that I hear sometimes between the strident jangles of a street-organ tune or in the voices of ships in the river. Perhaps I'm glad they've taken her away; it is good to have beautiful things near you for a while, and then lose them, for only so (I suppose) can you be properly disciplined. Only so (again, perhaps) can you remember that men write poetry for other reasons than because *dust* rhymes with *thrust* and *star* with *far*. The day she went away things went on much as usual. The traffic beacons twinkled in unison up and down Fifth Avenue, the great tide of cars (six-cylinders) carried "women of the better class" (see Oliver Herford's gorgeous poem, p. 537 of Burton Stevenson's anthology) about their delightful mundanities, Congreve and Ibsen taught contemporary playwrights that neither lust nor chastity were entirely post-war inventions. No more shall I see her distant grace against heaven, tightening her arrow toward a rising moon, threatening our thick air with her gay pagan archery. Perhaps, near at hand, she was not beautiful at all.

Since writing the above I have walked up Fourth Avenue and seen her with the workmen round her, about to lower her from the skeleton remnant of her tower. Madison Square was black with Actæons. I dare say they were making ribald jokes; but worse

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than that a Life Insurance Company had attached its initialed house flag to her. I was glad O. Henry, who loved her, was not there to see. Yet there are always various interpretations. Perhaps the life insurers intended the flag to drape round her and shield her as she descended. But I can't help thinking that her sister of Ephesus had the more glorious fate. I wished there had been some Zoning Law to forbid those great ropes so tight about her lovely waist.

The day Diana came down something went away from New York. There was no multitude all with one voice crying out Great is Diana of the Mannhattans. But the arrow she never shot sticks in my heart.



CHRISTMAS CARDBOARD

I HAVE no idea who are the happy manufacturers of those sheets of coloured cardboard; but when they book their reorders early in January they must notice, in the region of western Long Island, a pleasant depletion of stock among the village stationers. This means that the Urchin and I have begun the winter season of Cut-Outs.

It is a very simple pleasure; only requiring plenty of cardboard of different colours, scissors, and paste. To these may be added silver foil (such as comes as inner wrappings in tobacco packages), tissue paper of various colours, even paper clips (stolen from the office): if you are very luxurious, a box of water colours. But the cardboard and scissors and paste are the essentials. No Postexpressionist in a German *Schauspielhaus*, no imaginative Czechoslovak director or Viennese experimenter in *Andeutungstechnik* has more fun

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than the Urchin and I with our cardboard stage sets. I read in the *Theatre Arts Monthly* of the "frenetic ardour of Klein's décors"; I read that

a delirious period of representational renunciation set in, in which all form was eliminated save the form of disembodied passion. . . . Artistic unity as well as the foreign exchange compelled an austere simplicity bordering on nudity. . . . Jessner is a disciple of the Reinhardt Theatre, remoulded in the womb of the expressionistic era. He retains a measure of structural verisimilitude in his sets. . . . He conceives the word and the scene equally in terms of massed levels rising harmoniously to a dramatic resolution.

I read these things, and I realize, of course, that the Urchin and I have no chance of being taken seriously as stage designers until we learn to exhale a lingo like that. But I wonder, a little timidly, why it is that men feel it necessary to take the most fascinating and child-like of all games—the game of the theatre—and wrap it up in such ponderous technical talk. I should like to have heard Will Shakespeare and Ben Jonson discussing the problem of stage sets. And (to tell you the truth) I am getting a little weary of the word "plastic." I read again in the *Theatre Arts Monthly*, a fascinating magazine but terribly bullied by the current jargon of the *Andeutungsbuehne*, that

The modern German theatre, from the flat motionless surface of the backdrop to the animate, plastic form of the actor moving in space, is creating an intermediate

Christmas Cardboard

form, holding in its rhythmic lines the elements of rest and motion in one.

Surely we might have taken for granted (Ben Jonson would say?) that the backdrop is a background and the actor is "plastic." We believe so fully and enthusiastically in the things the modern theatre is trying to work out that we hate to see those things too fogged up with jargon.

Anyhow, the Urchin and I take all those matters for granted. He knows, wise elf, that what we are trying to work out is merely something that will please the eye and convey some sense of reality as simply and colourfully as possible. It may be our set of Queenstown Harbour at twilight, for instance. In the foreground a rough promontory, profiled out of green cardboard, is surmounted by a white lighthouse. A thin, undulated strip of blue cardboard represents a gentle agitation of the Atlantic. ("Elements of rest and motion in one.") Then, cunningly arranged on a slant, so that she appears to be moving toward us out of the landlocked bay, is the silhouette of a fine steamship, cut out of black card. Small rows of perforations serve for ports, and a toy flashlight laid behind her gives them a pleasant sparkle. And, backdrop for the whole, is one large sheet of blue, against which is pasted (in green) an outline of low Irish hills. Six silhouettes in all, cut out of different coloured sheets of card, are the total equipment. We challenge you to say it isn't an excellent sight, when decently propped up with little cardboard easels behind the flats. You can even, if you are feeling excessive, insert a declining sun (of

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orange cardboard) just slipping into a notch of the Celtic landscape. Fine enough! And the Urchin goes to bed in an ecstasy.

There was a snow scene that we set great store by. It represented (if we must tell the truth) the rustic home of an animal known in our family as "Mr. Gissing." The house, built up of white cardboard, was set upon a large white expanse representing heavy snow-fall—drifts may be piled up with cotton wool, where the arduous Mr. Gissing has shovelled clear his small brick path (a strip of red cardboard). You have no idea what excellent icicles, festooned along the eaves, can be serrated out of silver foil. Sombre pine trees, cut of green cardboard, stand behind the house. Between two of the trunks stretches a thread, on which hang (cut out of white notepaper) some garments belonging to Mr. Gissing's puppies. Over the windows you paste red tissue paper; and against this tissue paper, on the inside, are affixed silhouettes of the puppies themselves, looking eagerly out (tongues excitedly depending) for the arrival of Santa Claus. The house is illuminated within by the same small flashlight which served a few minutes ago for the portholes of the *Mauretania*. (The more funnels a ship has the better for the scene.) The European *régisseurs* touch on a painful point when they speak of "representational renunciation." The Urchin and I have had to renounce a good many tempting effects because our *régisseur* will have supper served along toward seven o'clock. And the dining table is really the best place for getting fine rhythms and tempos. The chandelier is

Christmas Cardboard

handy for complex lighting devices, such as are needed by a black background of sky with a careful pattern of the Dipper pricked in, light shining through it from behind.

When you get into the matter of interiors, all is more difficult. That's what we're working on now. Like Mr. Bel-Geddes, the Urchin and I are very keen for long flights of steps; but they are devilish things to cut out of cardboard and fold up and paste together in a stable congruity. Then, when you start tinkering with oblique perspectives—such as a wide doorway lit from behind (the flashlight again; we'll have to have more than one flashlight pretty soon), with a flight of stairs coming down at an angle and a little mirror on the wall near Mr. Gissing's hatrack (silver paper makes a fine mirror), you can see that we are up against Real Stuff. Another problem: the cardboard manufacturers have been rather shabby in their blue sheets. The blue isn't a clear, bright, lively tint; it is rather leaden and sour. That makes it hard to get just the effect of a lucent Christmas Eve sky, which was what we desiderated behind those tall French windows at the rear of the set. We shall have to play quite a violent jet of toy flashlight illumination upon that blue cardboard to tone it up to the proper luminosity.

I rather meant to tell you about the model of a tug-boat that we have devised. But I want to catch the 5:09 train. The Urchin is waiting for another go at that oblique staircase. And it's a point of honour with us not to work independently. It's like Beaumont and Fletcher: when the job is done, we hardly know which has done what.



ROUND COLUMBUS CIRCLE

[March, 1923]

THE other evening as I was walking along Fifty-ninth Street I noticed a man buying a copy of *Variety* at a newsstand. Obedient to my theory that life deserves all possible scrutiny, I thought it would be interesting to follow him and see exactly what he did.

I chose my quarry not merely at random. People who read *Variety* are likely to be interesting because they are pretty sure to be connected, no matter how remotely, with that odd, unpredictable, and high-spirited race who call themselves "artists," or "professionals." He might be in vaudeville, or in burlesque, or in the world of "outdoor shows." He might be a 'carnival man,' or a cabaret performer, a dancer, an "equilibrist," a marimba bandsman, a "sensational perch artist," a "lightning change artist," a "jass

Round Columbus Circle

baby," a saxophonist. He might be the manager of a picture house; he might be in the legitimate. He might even be one of my favourite pair of artists (of whom I think with affection: I have never seen them, but their professional card appears now and then in *Variety*—"Null and Void, The Dippy Daffy Duo").

So I followed him discreetly, to see what might happen.

At Columbus Circle he paused and looked about him rather as though he felt himself in a congenial element. The blue mildness of the night was bright with exciting signs, the ancient one of the full moon seeming rather pallid compared to the electric picture of Socony Oil pouring from a can into a funnel. There was a constant curving flow of skittering taxis, especially the kind that have slatted black panels abaft the windows: these look like little closed shutters and give a sense of secrecy, mystery, and vivid romance. Upon all this my fugitive gazed with a sort of affection; then he turned and stood a minute before the window of Childs' where small gas flames were as blue as violets under the griddle. I supposed that perhaps he was hungry, for he gazed pensively; but perhaps he was also thinking that the restaurant had quaintly changed its sex since afternoon; for now it was bustling with white-clad men instead of the laundered ladies of a few hours ago. He went on to an adjoining florist's window, and here he studied the lilacs, orchids (in their little individual test tubes), lilies of the valley, forsythia, narcissus, daffodils, pussy-willows, sweet peas. It was a very springlike window. I saw his eye fall upon the deftly

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wrapped sheaves of paper inside the shop, where bright colours glimmered through swathes of pale green tissue. These parcels were all addressed; ready to go out, I supposed, to very beautiful ladies.

He passed on (he had lit a pipe, by the way) by the Park Theatre, and he cast an observant eye upon that, noting that it was dark. Perhaps he pondered the vicissitudes of the show business. The windows of several haberdashers, all announcing their proximate retirement from traffic, won declensions from his eye: there were some quite lively shirts at \$1.85 that seemed nearly to obtain his suffrage. But again I saw him lured by food. A very minute, narrow doggerly, intensely masculine in aspect, but with its courteous legend LADIES INVITED glossed upon the pane, exhibited a tray of hamburger steak, liberally besprinkled with onion slivers. These he gravely considered. But still he proceeded; and still, in the phrase of Mr. Montague, I "committed myself to his vestiges."

It was the automobile business, next, that drew his attention. Those astonishing windows just south of the Circle plainly afforded him material for thought—places where, in great halls of baronial aspect, on Oriental rugs and marble floors, under little whispering galleries where the salesmen retire to their orisons, America's most shining triumphs are displayed. He was fascinated by the window of U. S. Rubber—where a single tire, mounted on a canary-coloured wheel, and an array of galoshes and arctics, are gravely displayed under tall blue hangings and festoons of artificial flowers. Or the Goodrich window, where a huge flat-

Round Columbus Circle

tened circlet has the space to itself on a crinkled wealth of purple-green shot silk. Amethystine lights shine through glazed screens behind this monstrous tire: drapes of imitation Spanish moss and enormous vases give the effect of a vaudeville stage set for some juggling act. The automobile business has learned all the tricks of Victorian stage *decor*; perhaps that was why my *Variety* reader was so thrilled. Another window, where the car comes bravely to the aid of the hard-pressed Church ("To Church in Their Chevrolet"—have you seen it?), is even more dramatic. Here the department store lends a hand also, for the modes worn by the figures are from Fifth Avenue. I was rather thrilled when I saw my fugitive halt also in front of the Dame Quickly showroom: a much more businesslike display, where the latest models of the Quickly family exhibit their modest and competent elegance.

But it was most interesting of all to find him striking off Broadway and entering the lobby of the Grenoble Hotel. He peered about the lobby as though he were expecting to meet someone; but I couldn't help suspecting that this was chiefly for the benefit of the clerk at the desk; what he really wanted was a quiet place to sit down and read his *Variety*. At any rate, he occupied the resilient corner of a couch for some time, studiously conning the magazine. I should have liked to tell the clerk behind the counter the reason why the Grenoble is always a special place to me—it was there, I believe, that Rudyard Kipling lay dangerously ill twenty-five years ago. I wonder if the hotel register holds any record of that momentous incident.

The Romany Stain

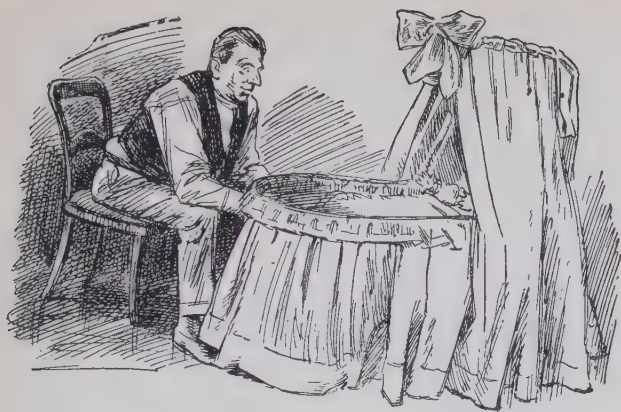
Presently—after carefully scanning the columns which tell how much each play took in at the box-office last week: perhaps the only positively accurate gauge of New York theatrical tastes; you will learn with surprise, for instance, that one of the leading moneymakers is a show called “Abie’s Irish Rose”—my subject folded up *Variety* and set forth again. Following, I was pleased to see him stop at Mr. Keyte’s bookshop on Fifty-seventh Street; and even more surprised to note that the thing that seemed most to catch his eye was a fine photo of Henry James. He complimented the saleslady upon it, and he bought a book. It was a copy of Sherwood Anderson’s *Winesburg, Ohio*, in the “Modern Library.”

But it was plain that all this time the idea of food had been loitering agreeably in the back of his mind. I trailed him back to Columbus Circle, and there, to my amusement, he returned straight to the little hash-alley where he had admired the meat patties with onions. He went in and sat down at the tiny counter. “Hamburg steak,” he said, “and put plenty of onions on it.” And then, after a moment, “Coffee with plenty,” he added.

“It’s plenty of everything with you to-night,” said the whitecoat, genially.

“Sure, everything but money,” remarked this mysterious creature. He propped up his *Winesburg* against the sugar basin and read while he ate.

At this point, fearing that my sleuthing might cause him to become self-conscious, I went thoughtfully away.



A SEPARATION

I HAVEN'T seen her for four days. Not since she spent her first night (in a manner of speaking) away from home. . . . This, by the way, is for parents only. Others won't understand.

Babblings, as I call her when we are alone, is eight months old. As you know, about that age these minuscule creatures are likely to be turned over to the care of a nurse. Well, now, *how* can I put it delicately? These outspoken medical fellows would simply say she had been weaned and leave it at that. The point is that the small creature sleeps in the nursery, and no longer in the bedroom with her parents. And so if you run for town early in the morning and don't get back at night until after dark, when will you see her? Not at all, until the week end.

The Romany Stain

I haven't seen her for four days: and walking home the other evening I realized what I had been missing. Why, her, the absurd microcosm. That little yammer, or (let's be honest) that sudden rousing squall, beginning in the middlenight as suddenly as a locomotive blows off steam; ending with equal suddenness when a familiar form leaned over the crib; those queer rhythmical whimpers of cheer when, completely pleased, she was pushing herself down the psychic slopes of sleep; the excitement when she first rolled over, raised her head like a turtle, and gazed about with an air of triumph (until she learned that, also like the slug testudo, she couldn't get back) . . . these were what I lacked.

I *said* you wouldn't understand, didn't I?

But what I missed most of all were those private conferences we had, before breakfast, while I was getting dressed. The rest of the family being already at table, and cries coming aloft ("You'll miss your train"), what was I doing? Well, that was the time when I was calling her . . . I told you what I called her. We were alone. As I was tying my tie, she could watch me from the crib. I don't know just what she was laughing at. But anyhow, and since I'm not going to go into details, we had a few brief merri-ments together. We both understood them perfectly, each in our own way. She won't tell about them—no, not ever—because she won't remember them: and I am not one to let loose secrets shared with a lady, even the youngest. No, we'll respect an eternity of taciturnity. I'll have to confess, however, that there was just a little element of trickery on my part. Because, dress-

A Separation

ing finished, tie tied, hair brushed, all ready to make a break for the cup of coffee and the train, I wasn't quite honest. I gave her a kinsprit grin, and said (this was pretty bad): "I'll be right back." I think she got the impression I was just going out of the room for a moment or so and would return to be entertained further. In that way I got off without distressing her. And then I never did come back, not till night time. It wasn't quite straight, maybe. I remember that her eyes followed me to the door.

This is bad; because I'm giving the impression that she liked me as much as I liked her. That's not so, of course. In a few seconds she had forgotten me entirely. She had far better company, all day long. The best company in the world, indeed. And of course I had plenty to think about, myself. But I didn't realize, until the bedroom was so painfully quiet, how much she meant. . . . And I haven't *seen* her for four days, not since she spent her first night away from home, in a manner of speaking.



THE UNWRITTEN BOOK

MANY critics have spoken—and many more will speak—of Doughty's "Arabia" as one of the world's great travel books. What they have said is true; though we doubt if that terrible, exhausting, and fiery work will ever be popular, though it may readily become fashionable.

But there is a book of travel (or travail) still to be written, dealing with a wilderness even more appalling than the Arabian desert, a book that might possibly be just as great as—or greater than—Doughty's. That is the book, unwritable perhaps, that would deal adequately, honestly, with the terrible, magnificent jungle of New York. Perhaps desert is a better word for it than jungle, for in a desert the sand leaves no trace of your passage. But I stick to the idea of a jungle, for it has strange and fantastic analogies. Through

The Unwritten Book

these vast thickets, trudging elate or despairing, each explorer beats out his own little paths of precarious safety. Lie covert near where the spiritual tracks cross one another—in a newspaper office, for example, a bewildering ganglion of threaded human nerves and passions—and watch the inhabitants of the forest padding softly on their strange quests. For, like the wild animals, each has his own secret, instinctive way toward some Drinking Place. Or you may stand, if you prefer, dumbly contemplating the pitiful brightness of the steel-plated subway stairs—brightness worn by millions of tragic, hopeful feet.

Like aisles of darkness under the dense tropic foliage are those subway tunnels, green and red lights brilliant as parakeets in the gloom. Bright as clumps of poisonous orchids are the little news-kennels with their coloured magazine covers. Poison, poison to the spirit, the thoughtful explorer may mutter to himself, and stoutly avert the eye. At every turning in the jungle, beside every thicket, or under the huge spreading palm-tree girders of the Pennsylvania trainshed, he may imagine he hears the sudden soft whir of Time's savage arrow, feathered so prettily, flicked into the body of some fellow traveller. The shrill call of the traffic cop's whistle, is it not dreadfully like the cry of some threatening parrot or macaw, perched ironically above the throng? That cry halts even the great pachyderms and the chattering monkeys, all on their way to some Drinking Place of their own. Like a huge yellow python you can see the L train winding among the tall bamboo groves of buildings. And you must struggle

The Romany Stain

with everyone, even with your own indolent soul, for command of your spirit in that monstrous jungle.

The analogies are terrible indeed! In that frenzy of haste and friendliness, where the traveller must even struggle against his well-loved comrades for the endangered command of his own soul; where silly half-truths are so fashionable and so well rewarded that even the desire to write honourable candour easily grows dim; where sometimes one almost attains the ultimate and most fearful disillusion—that God Himself is in a hurry; in that jungle be wary and be calm, my soul. The whole jungle conspires and rustles with menace; it is thick with beauty and terror; how swiftly the creepers wind you in if you try to pause for reason and peace. Strange enemies, in the loveliest of sleek stripings, lie on the branching limbs overhead, waiting to spring; crouch in the long grass, eager to strike. In that jungle men cannot even worship God without quarrelling about it. The strangest laughs are heard, sounding through the stillness; the lapping of the thirsty creatures is anxiously suspended as they raise their heads and listen to the queer voices of the night.

Magnificent, thrilling, inexplicable wilderness! Chop through it your own little paths, endangered soul; find your own strange hidden waters of refreshment. And pay no need to any wisdom save your own. There are the quaintest flutings and voices of decoy. The owl has a beguiling murmur; the adder a shining skin. Be childish in your sullen wisdom, O wandering spirit! It is of this wilderness that some day a book might be

The Unwritten Book

written. Yet perhaps it has been written already—the greatest book of our time, maybe, if your mind runs that way. You can always tell when a book is really great—does it become a classic for children? For men, terribly fearing the sharp wisdom of fables, always soften them by pretending they were written for children. It happened to Swift, for instance. And the greatest book of our time, perhaps, is “The Jungle Book.”

Magnificent, terrible jungle of New York! Like Mowgli, you must learn to run with the wolves, and learn to love them, for they are lovable and brave. But be wary, O soul; for there will come a time when you must return to live with men.

THE END

CHIMNEYSMOKE

CHIMNEYSMOKE

This collection of domestic madrigals was modest and sincere in origin, and intimate to actuality. You would not expect the author to speak in cool detachment of matter so near to heart and memory. The "little house in Queens" was a very small one indeed; but it had real-estate prescience. That village so primitive and solitary in 1916 that the commuter could walk home from Bellaire station through open fields, has since become one of the most astonishing suburban developments anywhere. Only lately I read in the magazine of tycoonery *Fortune* that one builder alone, the Gross-Morton Company of Jamaica, has put up over 5500 Little Houses in that territory. It makes me smile to think of the young couple who used to leave the baby with a grandmother and take the rustic trolley into Jamaica for an evening adventure. Queens Village is now so dense with Little Houses that the last time we went there we could not identify the one that used to be ours, for the names of the streets have been changed. What used to be Albany Avenue is now 10852 217th Place. It reads like an income tax.

I thought, as I read the article in *Fortune*, that the Gross-Morton Company really should make these poems part of standard equipment for each of those 5500 homes. The emotions herein described are just as important, and universal, as streamlined plumbing and iceboxes.

Chimneysmoke was put together of selections from three preceding small books of verse: *Songs for a Little House*, *The Rocking Horse*, and *Hide and Seek*. Tom Fogarty did some very attractive drawings for it, but we had trouble in finding a title. I remember that the original publisher, George Doran, was rather shocked at my jocularly suggesting *In a Family Way*.

Chimneysmoke

TO THE LITTLE HOUSE

DEAR little house, dear shabby street,
Dear books and beds and food to eat!
How feeble words are to express
The facets of your tenderness.

How white the sun comes through the pane!
In tinkling music drips the rain!
How burning bright the furnace glows!
What paths to shovel when it snows!

O dearly loved Long Island trains!
O well remembered joys and pains. . . .
How near the housetops Beauty leans
Along that little street in Queens!

Let these poor rhymes abide for proof
Joy dwells beneath a humble roof;
Heaven is not built of country seats
But little queer suburban streets!

March, 1917.

A GRACE BEFORE WRITING

THIS is a sacrament, I think!
Holding the bottle toward the light,
As blue as lupin gleams the ink;
May Truth be with me as I write!

That small dark cistern may afford
Reunion with some vanished friend,—
And with this ink I have just poured
May none but honest words be penned!

DEDICATION FOR A FIREPLACE

THIS hearth was built for thy delight,
For thee the logs were sawn,
For thee the largest chair, at night,
Is to the chimney drawn.

For thee, dear lass, the match was lit
To yield the ruddy blaze—
May Jack Frost give us joy of it
For many, many days.

TAKING TITLE

TO make this house my very own
Could not be done by law alone.
Though covenant and deed convey
Absolute fee, as lawyers say,
There are domestic rites beside
By which this house is sanctified.

By kindled fire upon the hearth,
By planted pansies in the garth,
By food, and by the quiet rest
Of those brown eyes that I love best,
And by a friend's bright gift of wine,
I dedicate this house of mine.

When all but I are soft abed
I trail about my quiet stead
A wreath of blue tobacco smoke
(A charm that evil never broke)
And bring my ritual to an end
By giving shelter to a friend.

These done, O dwelling, you become
Not just a house, but truly **Home!**



*And by a friend's bright gift of wine,
I dedicate this house of mine.*

THE SECRET

IT was the House of Quietness
To which I came at dusk;
The garth was lit with roses
And heavy with their musk.

The tremulous tall poplar trees
Stood whispering around,
The gentle flicker of their plumes
More quiet than no sound.

And as I wondered at the door
What magic might be there,
The Lady of Sweet Silences
Came softly down the stair.

ONLY A MATTER OF TIME

DOWN-SLIPPING Time, sweet, swift, and
shallow stream,
Here, like a boulder, lies this afternoon
Across your eager flow. So you shall stay,
Deepened and dammed, to let me breathe and be.
Your troubled fluency, your running gleam
Shall pause, and circle idly, still and clear:
The while I lie and search your glassy pool
Where, gently coiling in their lazy round,
Unseparable minutes drift and swim,
Eddy and rise and brim. And I will see
How many crystal bubbles of slack Time
The mind can hold and cherish in one *Now!*

Now, for one conscious vacancy of sense,
The stream is gathered in a deepening pond,
Not a mere moving mirror. Through the sharp
Correct reflection of the standing scene
The mind can dip, and cleanse itself with rest,
And see, slow spinning in the lucid gold,
Your liquid motes, imperishable Time.

CHIMNEYSMOKE

It cannot be. The runnel slips away:
The clear smooth downward sluice begins again,
More brightly slanting for that trembling pause,
Leaving the sense its conscious vague unease
As when a sonnet flashes on the mind,
Trembles and burns an instant, and is gone.

AT THE MERMAID CAFETERIA

TRUTH is enough for prose:
Calmly it goes
To tell just what it knows.

For verse, skill will suffice—
Delicate, nice
Casting of verbal dice.

Poetry, men attain
By subtler pain
More flagrant in the brain—

An honesty unfeigned,
A heart unchained,
A madness well restrained.

OUR HOUSE

IT should be yours, if I could build
 The quaint old dwelling I desire,
 With books and pictures bravely filled
 And chairs beside an open fire,
 White-panelled rooms with candles lit—
 I lie awake to think of it!

A dial for the sunny hours,
 A garden of old-fashioned flowers—
 Say marigolds and lavender
 And mignonette and fever-few,
 And Judas-tree and maidenhair
 And candytuft and thyme and rue—
 All these for you to wander in.

A Chinese carp (called *Mandarin*)
 Waving a sluggish silver fin
 Deep in the moat: so tame he comes
 To lip your fingers offering crumbs.
 Tall chimneys, like long listening ears,
 White shutters, ivy green and thick,
 And walls of ruddy Tudor brick
 Grown mellow with the passing years.

And windows with small leaded panes,
Broad window-seats for when it rains;
A big blue bowl of pot pourri
And—yes, a Spanish chestnut tree
To coin the autumn's minted gold.
A summer house for drinking tea—
All these (just think!) for you and me.

A staircase of the old black wood
Cut in the days of Robin Hood,
And banisters worn smooth as glass
Down which your hand will lightly pass;
A piano with pale yellow keys
For wistful twilight melodies,
And dusty bottles in a bin—
All these for you to revel in!

But when? Ah well, until that time
We'll habit in this house of rhyme.
1912

ON NAMING A HOUSE

WHEN I a householder became
I had to give my house a name.

I thought I'd call it "Poplar Trees,"
Or "Widdershins" or "Velvet Bees,"
Or "Just Beneath a Star."
I thought of "House Where Plumbings
Freeze,"
Or "As You Like it," "If You Please,"
Or "Nicotine" or "Bread and Cheese,"
"Full Moon" or "Doors Ajar."

But still I sought some subtle charm,
Some rune to guard my roof from harm
And keep the devil far;
I thought of this, and I was saved!
I had my letter-heads engraved
The House Where Brown Eyes Are.

A HALLOWE'EN MEMORY

DO you remember, Heart's Desire,
The night when Hallowe'en first came?
The newly dedicated fire,
The hearth unsanctified by flame?

How anxiously we swept the bricks
(How tragic, were the draught not right!)
And then the blaze enwrapped the sticks
And filled the room with dancing light.

We could not speak, but only gaze,
Nor half believe what we had seen—
Our home, our hearth, our golden blaze,
Our cider mugs, our Hallowe'en!

And then a thought occurred to me—
We ran outside with sudden shout
And looked up at the roof, to see
Our own dear smoke come drifting out,

And of all man's felicities
The very subtlest one, say I,
Is when, for the first time, he sees
His hearthfire smoke against the sky.



*And of all man's felicities
The very subtlest one, say I,
Is when, for the first time, he sees
His hearthfire smoke against the sky.*

REFUSING YOU IMMORTALITY

IF I should tell, unstinted,
Your beauty and your grace,
All future lads would whisper
Traditions of your face;
If I made public tumult
Your mirth, your queenly state,
Posterity would grumble
That it was born too late.

I will not frame your beauty
In bright undying phrase,
Nor blaze it as a legend
For unborn men to praise—
For why should future lovers
Be saddened and depressed?
Deluded, let them fancy
Their own girls loveliest!

BAYBERRY CANDLES

DEAR sweet, when dusk comes up the hill,
The fire leaps high with golden prongs;
I place along the chimneysill
The tiny candles of my songs.

And though unsteadily they burn,
As evening shades from gray to blue
Like candles they will surely learn
To shine more clear, for love of you.

SECRET LAUGHTER

“I had a secret laughter.”

—Walter de la Mare.

THERE is a secret laughter
That often comes to me,
And though I go about my work
As humble as can be,
There is no prince or prelate
I envy—no, not one.
No evil can befall me—
By God, I have a son!

SIX WEEKS OLD

HE is so small, he does not know
The summer sun, the winter snow;
The spring that ebbs and comes again,
Ail this is far beyond his ken.

A little world he feels and sees:
His mother's arms, his mother's knees;
He hides his face against her breast,
And does not care to learn the rest.



*A little world he feels and sees:
His mother's arms, his mother's knees—*

A CHARM

For Our New Fireplace,
To Stop Its Smoking

O WOOD, burn bright; O flame, be quick;
O smoke, draw cleanly up the flue—
My lady chose your every brick
And sets her dearest hopes on you!

Logs cannot burn, nor tea be sweet,
Nor white bread turn to crispy toast,
Until the charm be made complete
By love, to lay the sooty ghost.

And then, dear books, dear waiting chairs,
Dear china and mahogany,
Draw close, for on the happy stairs
My brown-eyed girl comes down for tea!

MY PIPE

MY PIPE is old
 And caked with soot;
 My wife remarks:
 "How can you put
 That horrid relic,
 So unclean,
 Inside your mouth?
 The nicotine
 Is strong enough
 To stupefy
 A Swedish plumber."
 I reply:

"This is the kind
 Of pipe I like:
 I fill it full
 Of Happy Strike,
 Or Barking Cat
 Or Cabman's Puff,
 Or Brooklyn Bridge
 (That potent stuff)
 Or Chaste Embraces,
 Knacker's Twist,
 Old Honeycomb
 Or Niggerfist.

C H I M N E Y S M O K E

I clamp my teeth
Upon its stem—
It is my bliss,
My diadem.
Whatever Fate
May do to me,
This is my favorite

B

B B.

For this dear pipe
You feign to scorn
I smoked the night
The boy was born.”

THE 5:42

LILAC, violet, and rose
 Ardently the city glows;
 Sunset glory, purely sweet,
 Gilds the dreaming byway-street,
 And, above the Avenue,
 Winter dusk is deepening blue.

(Then, across Long Island meadows,
 Darker, darker, grow the shadows:
 Patience, little waiting lass!
 Laggard minutes slowly pass;
 Patience, laughs the yellow fire:
 Homeward bound is heart's desire!)

Hark, adown the canyon street
 Flows the merry tide of feet;
 High the golden buildings loom
 Blazing in the purple gloom;
 All the town is set with stars,
Homeward chant the Broadway cars!



The 5:42

All down Thirty-second Street
Homeward, Homeward, say the feet!
 Tramping men, uncouth to view,
 Footsore, weary, thrill anew;
 Gone the ringing telephones,
 Blessed nightfall now atones,
 Casting brightness on the snow
 Golden the train windows go.

Then (how long it seems) at last
 All the way is overpast.
 Heart that beats your muffled drum,
 Lo, your venturer is come!
 Wide the door! Leap high, O fire!
 Home at length is heart's desire!
 Gone is weariness and fret,
 At the sill warm lips are met.
 Once again may be renewed
 The conjoined beatitude.

PETER PAN

“The boy for whom Barrie wrote Peter Pan—the original of Peter Pan—has died in battle.”

—New York Times.

AND Peter Pan is dead? Not so!
When mothers turn the lights down
low

And tuck their little sons in bed,
They know that Peter is not dead. . . .

That little rounded blanket-hill;
Those prayer-time eyes, so deep and still—
However wise and great a man
He grows, he still is Peter Pan.

And mothers' ways are often queer:
They pause in doorways, just to hear
A tiny breathing; think a prayer;
And then go tiptoe down the stair.

IN HONOR OF TAFFY TOPAZ

TAFFY, the topaz-colored cat,
Thinks now of this and now of that,
But chiefly of his meals.
Asparagus, and cream, and fish,
Are objects of his Freudian wish;
What you don't give, he steals.

His gallant heart is strongly stirred
By clink of plate or flight of bird,
He has a plummy tail;
At night he treads on stealthy pad
As merry as Sir Galahad
A-seeking of the Grail.

His amiable amber eyes
Are very friendly, very wise;
Like Buddha, grave and fat,
He sits, regardless of applause,
And thinking, as he kneads his paws,
What fun to be a cat!

THE CEDAR CHEST

HER mind is like her cedar chest
Wherein in quietness do rest
The wistful dreamings of her heart
In fragrant folds all laid apart.

There, put away in sprigs of rhyme
Until her life's full blossom-time,
Flutter (like tremulous little birds)
Her small and sweet maternal words.

READING ALOUD

ONCE we read Tennyson aloud
In our great fireside chair;
Between the lines, my lips could touch
Her April-scented hair.

How very fond I was, to think
The printed poems fair,
When close within my arms I held
A living lyric there!

ANIMAL CRACKERS

ANIMAL crackers, and cocoa to drink,
That is the finest of suppers, I think;
When I'm grown up and can have what I please
I think I shall always insist upon these.

What do *you* choose when you're offered a treat?
When Mother says, "What would you like best
to eat?"

Is it waffles and syrup, or cinnamon toast?
It's cocoa and animals that *I* love most!

The kitchen's the cosiest place that I know:
The kettle is singing, the stove is aglow,
And there in the twilight, how jolly to see
The cocoa and animals waiting for me.

Daddy and Mother dine later in state,
With Mary to cook for them, Susan to wait;
But they don't have nearly as much fun as I
Who eat in the kitchen with Nurse standing by;
And Daddy once said, he would like to be me
Having cocoa and animals once more for tea!



*And Daddy once said he would like to be me
Having cocoa and animals once more for tea!*

THE MILKMAN

EARLY in the morning, when the dawn is on
the roofs,

You hear his wheels come rolling, you hear his
horse's hoofs;

You hear the bottles clinking, and then he drives
away:

You yawn in bed, turn over, and begin another
day!

The old-time dairy maids are dear to every poet's
heart—

I'd rather be the dairy *man* and drive a little cart,
And bustle round the village in the early morning
blue,

And hang my reins upon a hook, as I've seen
Casey do.

LIGHT VERSE

AT night the gas lamps light our street,
Electric bulbs our homes;
The gas is billed in cubic feet,
Electric light in ohms.

But one illumination still
Is brighter far, and sweeter;
It is not figured in a bill,
Nor measured by a meter.

More bright than lights that money buys,
More pleasing to discerners,
The shining lamps of Helen's eyes,
Those lovely double burners!

THE FURNACE

AT night I opened
The furnace door:
The warm glow brightened
The cellar floor.

The fire that sparkled
Blue and red,
Kept small toes cosy
In their bed.

As up the stair
So late I stole,
I said my prayer:
Thank God for coal!

WASHING THE DISHES

WHEN we on simple rations sup
 How easy is the washing up!
 But heavy feeding complicates
 The task by soiling many plates.

And though I grant that I have prayed
 That we might find a serving-maid,
 I'd scullion all my days, I think,
 To see Her smile across the sink!

I wash, She wipes. In water hot
 I souse each dish and pan and pot;
 While Taffy mutters, purrs, and begs,
 And rubs himself against my legs.

The man who never in his life
 Has washed the dishes with his wife
 Or polished up the silver plate—
 He still is largely celibate.

One warning: there is certain ware
 That must be handled with all care:
 The Lord Himself will give you up
 If you should drop a willow cup!

[58]



*But heavy feeding complicates
The task by soiling many plates.*

THE CHURCH OF UNBENT KNEES

AS I went by the church to-day
 I heard the organ cry;
 And goodly folk were on their knees,
 But I went striding by. •

My minster hath a roof more vast:
 My aisles are oak trees high;
 My altar-cloth is on the hills,
 My organ is the sky.

I see my rood upon the clouds,
 The winds, my chanted choir;
 My crystal windows, heaven-glazed,
 Are stained with sunset fire.

The stars, the thunder, and the rain,
 White sands and purple seas—
 These are His pulpit and His pew,
 My God of Unbent Knees!

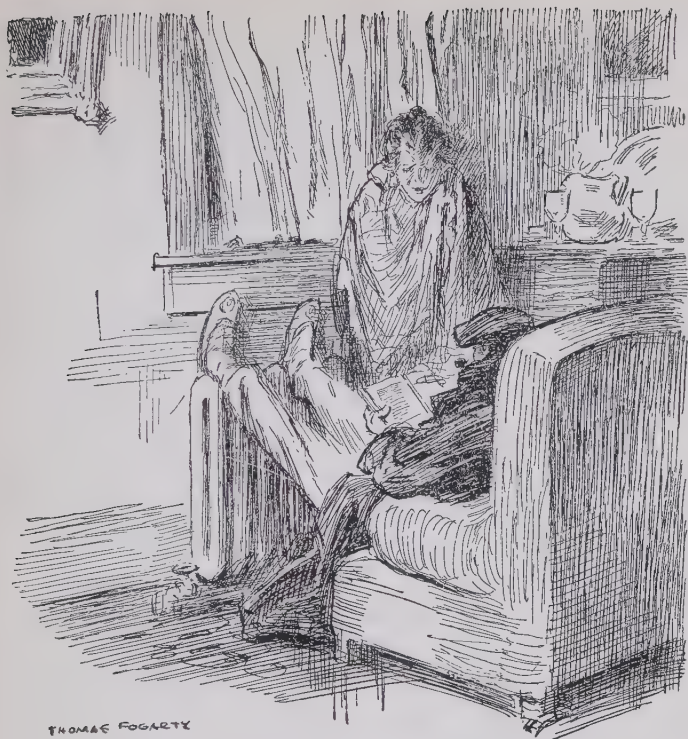
ELEGY WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY
COAL-BIN

THE furnace tolls the knell of falling
steam,
The coal supply is virtually done,
And at this price, indeed it does not seem
As though we could afford another ton.

Now fades the glossy, cherished anthracite;
The radiators lose their temperature:
How ill 'avail, on such a frosty night,
The "short and simple flannels of the poor."

Though in the icebox, fresh and newly laid,
The rude forefathers of the omelet sleep,
No eggs for breakfast till the bill is paid:
We cannot cook again till coal is cheap.

Can Morris-chair or papier-mâché bust
Revivify the failing pressure-gauge?
Chop up the grand piano if you must,
And burn the East Aurora parrot-cage!
[62]



How ill avail, on such a frosty night. . . .

C H I M N E Y S M O K E

Full many a can of purest kerosene
The dark unfathomed tanks of Standard Oil
Shall furnish me, and with their aid I mean
To bring my morning coffee to a boil.

THE OLD SWIMMER

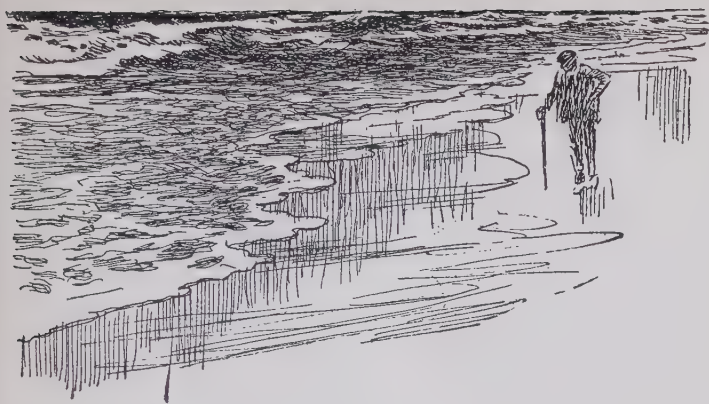
I OFTEN wander on the beach
Where once, so brown of limb,
The biting air, the roaring surf
Summoned me to swim.

I see my old abundant youth
Where combers lean and spill,
And though I taste the foam no more
Other swimmers will.

Oh, good exultant strength to meet
The arching wall of green,
To break the crystal, swirl, emerge
Dripping, taut, and clean.

To climb the moving hilly blue,
To dive in ecstasy
And feel the salty chill embrace
Arm and rib and knee.

What brave and vanished laughter then
And tingling thighs to run,
[66]



CHIMNEYSMOKE

What warm and comfortable sands
Dreaming in the sun.

The crumbling water spreads in snow,
The surf is hissing still,
And though I kiss the salt no more
Other swimmers will.

THE MOON-SHEEP

THE moon seems like a docile sheep,
She pastures while all people sleep;
But sometimes, when she goes astray,
She wanders all alone by day.

Up in the clear blue morning air
We are surprised to see her there,
Grazing in her woolly white,
Waiting the return of night.

When dusk lets down the meadow bars
She greets again her lambs, the stars!

SMELLS

WHY is it that the poets tell
So little of the sense of smell?
These are the odors I love well:

The smell of coffee freshly ground;
Or rich plum pudding, holly crowned;
Or onions fried and deeply browned.

The fragrance of a fummy pipe;
The smell of apples, newly ripe;
And printers' ink on leaden type.

Woods by moonlight in September
Breathe most sweet; and I remember
Many a smoky camp-fire ember.

Camphor, turpentine, and tea,
The balsam of a Christmas tree,
These are whiffs of gramarye. . .
A ship smells best of all to me!

SMELLS (JUNIOR)

MY Daddy smells like tobacco and books,
Mother, like lavender and listerine;
Uncle John carries a whiff of cigars,
Nannie smells starchy and soapy and clean.

Shandy, my dog, has a smell of his own
(When he's been out in the rain he smells
most);
But Katie, the cook, is more splendid than all—
She smells exactly like hot buttered toast!



But Katie, the cook, is more splendid than all—

MAR QUONG, CHINESE LAUNDRYMAN

I LIKE the Chinese laundryman:
 He smokes a pipe that bubbles,
 And seems, as far as I can tell,
 A man with but few troubles.
 He has much to do, no doubt,
 But also much to think about.

Most men (for instance I myself)
 Are spending, at all times,
 All our hard-earned quarters,
 Our nickels and our dimes:
 With Mar Quong it's the other way—
 He takes in small change every day.

Next time you call for collars
 In his steamy little shop,
 Observe how tight his pigtail
 Is coiled and piled on top.
 But late at night he lets it hang
 And thinks of the Yang-tse-kiang.

THE FAT LITTLE PURSE

ON Saturdays, after the baby
 Is bathed, fed, and sleeping serene,
 His mother, as quickly as may be,
 Arranges the household routine.
 She rapidly makes herself pretty
 And leaves the young limb with his nurse,
 Then gaily she starts for the city,
 And with her the fat little purse.

She trips through the crowd at the station,
 To the rendezvous spot where we meet,
 And keeping her eyes from temptation,
 She avoids the most windowy street!
 She is off for the Weekly Adventure;
 To her comrade for better and worse
 She says, "Never mind, when you've spent your
 Last bit, here's the fat little purse."

Apart, in her thrifty exchequer,
 She has hidden what must not be spent:
 Enough for the butcher and baker,
 Katie's wages, and milkman, and rent;
 [76]



Perhaps it's a ragged child crying

But the rest of her brave little treasure
 She is gleeful and prompt to disburse—
 What a richness of innocent pleasure
 Can come from her fat little purse!

But either by giving or buying,
 The little purse does not stay fat—
 Perhaps it's a ragged child crying,
 Perhaps it's a "pert little hat."
 And the bonny brown eyes that were brightened
 By pleasures so quaint and diverse,
 Look up at me, wistful and frightened,
 To see such a thin little purse.

The wisest of all financiering
 Is that which is done by our wives:
 By some little known profiteering
 They add twos and twos and make fives;
 And, husband, if you would be learning
 The secret of thrift, it is terse:
 Invest the great part of your earning
 In her little, fat little purse.

THE REFLECTION

(To N. B. D.)

I HAVE not heard her voice, nor seen her
face,
Nor touched her hand;
And yet some echo of her woman's grace
I understand.

I have no picture of her loveliness,
Her smile, her tint;
But that she is both beautiful and good
I have true hint.

In all that my friend thinks and says, I see
Her mirror true;
His thought of her is gentle; she must be
All gentle too.

In all his grief or laughter, work or play,
Each mood and whim,
How brave and tender, day by common day,
She speaks through him!
[80]

CHIMNEYSMOKE

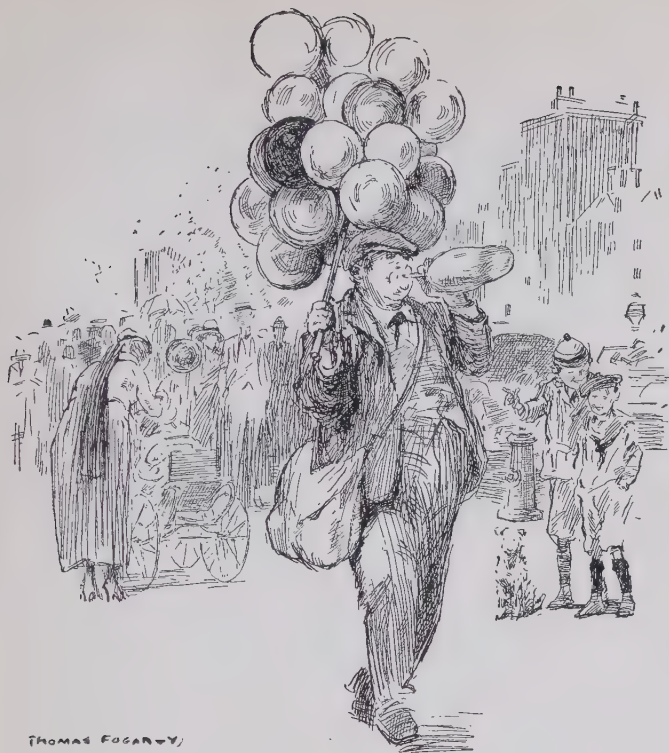
Therefore I say I know her, be her face
Or dark or fair—
For when he shows his heart's most secret place
I see her there!

THE BALLOON PEDDLER

WHO is the man on Chestnut street
 With colored toy balloons?
 I see him with his airy freight
 On sunny afternoons—
 A peddler of such lovely goods!
 The heart leaps to behold
 His mass of bubbles, red and green
 And blue and pink and gold.

For sure that noble peddler man
 Hath antic merchandise:
 His toys that float and swim in air
 Attract my eager eyes.
 Perhaps he is a changeling prince
 Bewitched through magic moons
 To tempt us solemn busy folk
 With meaningless balloons.

Beware, oh, valiant merchantman,
 Tread cautious on the pave!
 Lest some day come some realist,
 Some haggard soul and grave,
 [82]



The Balloon Peddler

C H I M N E Y S M O K E

A puritan efficientist

Who deems thy toys a sin—

He'll stalk thee madly from behind

And prick them with a pin!

LINES FOR AN ECCENTRIC'S
BOOK PLATE

TO use my books all friends are bid:
My shelves are open for 'em;
And in each one, as Grolier did,
I write *Et Amicorum*.

All lovely things in truth belong
To him who best employs them;
The house, the picture and the song
Are his who most enjoys them.

Perhaps this book holds precious lore,
And you may best discern it.
If you appreciate it more
Than I—why don't return it!



*If you appreciate it more
Than I—why don't return it?*

TO A POST-OFFICE INKWELL

HOW many humble hearts have dipped
In you, and scrawled their manuscript!
Have shared their secrets, told their cares,
Their curious and quaint affairs!

Your pool of ink, your scratchy pen,
Have moved the lives of unborn men,
And watched young people, breathing hard,
Put Heaven on a postal card.

THE CRIB

I SOUGHT immortality
Here and there—

I sent my rockets

Into the air:

I gave my name

A hostage to ink;

I dined a critic

And bought him drink.

I spurned the weariness

Of the flesh;

Denied fatigue

And began afresh—

If men knew all,

How they would laugh!

I even planned

My epitaph. . . .

And then one night

When the dusk was thin

I heard the nursery

Rites begin:



And then one night
When the dusk was thin
I heard the nursery
Rites begin—

CHIMNEYSMOKE

I heard the tender
Soothings said
Over a crib, and
A small sweet head.

Then in a flash
It came to me
That there was my
Immortality!

THE POET

THE barren music of a word or phrase,
 The futile arts of syllable and stress,
 He sought. The poetry of common days
 He did not guess.

The simplest, sweetest rhythms life affords—
 Unselfish love, true effort truly done,
 The tender themes that underlie all words—
 He knew not one.

The human cadence and the subtle chime
 Of little laughs, home and child and wife,
 He knew not. Artist merely in his rhyme,
 Not in his life.



THOMAS FOGARTY

*The human cadence and the subtle chime
Of little laughters—*

TO A DISCARDED MIRROR

DEAR glass, before your silver pane
My lady used to tend her hair;
And yet I search your disc in vain
To find some shadow of her there.

I thought your magic, deep and bright,
Might still some dear reflection hold:
Some glint of eyes or shoulders white,
Some flash of gowns she wore of old.

Your polished round must still recall
The laughing face, the neck like snow—
Remember, on your lonely wall,
That Helen used you long ago!

TO A CHILD

THE greatest poem ever known
Is one all poets have outgrown:
The poetry, innate, untold,
Of being only four years old.

Still young enough to be a part
Of Nature's great impulsive heart,
Born comrade of bird, beast and tree
And unselfconscious as the bee—

And yet with lovely reason skilled
Each day new paradise to build;
Elate explorer of each sense,
Without dismay, without pretence!

In your unstained transparent eyes
There is no conscience, no surprise:
Life's queer conundrums you accept,
Your strange divinity still kept.
[98]

C H I M N E Y S M O K E

Being, that now absorbs you, all
Harmonious, unit, integral,
Will shred into perplexing bits,—
Oh, contradictions of the wits!

And Life, that sets all things in rhyme,
May make you poet, too, in time—
But there were days, O tender elf,
When you were Poetry itself!

TO A VERY YOUNG GENTLEMAN

MY child, what painful vistas are before you!
 What years of youthful ills and pangs
 and bumps—
 Indignities from aunts who “just adore” you,
 And chicken-pox and measles, croup and
 mumps!
 I don’t wish to dismay you,—it’s not fair to,
 Promoted now from bassinet to crib,—
 But, O my babe, what troubles flesh is heir to
 Since God first made so free with Adam’s rib!

Laboriously you will proceed with teething;
 When teeth are here, you’ll meet the dentist’s
 chair;
 They’ll teach you ways of walking, eating,
 breathing,
 That stoves are hot, and how to brush your hair;
 And so, my poor, undaunted little stripling,
 By bruises, tears, and trousers you will grow,
 And, borrowing a leaf from Mr. Kipling,
 I’ll wish you luck, and moralize you so:



What years of youthful ills and pangs and bumps—

CHIMNEYSMOKE

If you can think up seven thousand methods
Of giving cooks and parents heart disease;
Can rifle pantry-shelves, and then give death odds
By water, fire, and falling out of trees;
If you can fill your every boyish minute
With sixty seconds' worth of mischief done,
Yours is the house and everything that's in it,
And, which is more, you'll be your father's son!

TO AN OLD-FASHIONED POET

(Lizette Woodworth Reese)

MOST tender poet, when the gods confer
They save your gracile songs a nook apart,
And bless with Time's untainted lavender
The ageless April of your singing heart.

You, in an age unbridled, ne'er declined
The appointed patience that the Muse decrees,
Until, deep in the flower of the mind
The hovering words alight, like bridegroom
bees.

By casual praise or casual blame unstirred
The placid gods grant gifts where they belong:
To you, who understand, the perfect word,
The recompensed necessities of song.

BURNING LEAVES IN SPRING

WHEN withered leaves are lost in flame
Their eddying ghosts, a thin blue haze,
Blow through the thickets whence they came
On amberlucent autumn days.

The cool green woodland heart receives
Their dim, dissolving, phantom breath;
In young hereditary leaves
They see their happy life-in-death.

My minutes perish as they glow—
Time burns my crazy bonfire through;
But ghosts of blackened hours still blow,
Eternal Beauty, back to you!

BURNING LEAVES, NOVEMBER

THESE are folios of April,
All the library of spring,
Missals gilt and rubricated
With the frost's illumining.

Ruthless, we destroy these treasures,
Set the torch with hand profane—
Gone, like Alexandrian vellums,
Like the books of burnt Louvain!

Yet these classics are immortal:
O collectors, have no fear,
For the publisher will issue
New editions every year.

A VALENTINE GAME

(For Two Players)

THEY have a game, thus played:

He says unto his maid
*What are those shining things
So brown, so golden brown?*

And she, in doubt, replies
*How now, what shining things
So brown?*

But then, she coming near,
To see more clear,
He looks again, and cries
(All startled with surprise)
*Sweet wretch, they are your eyes,
So brown, so brown!*

The climax and the end consist
In kissing, and in being kissed.

FOR A BIRTHDAY

AT TWO years old the world he sees
Must seem expressly made to please!
Such new-found words and games to try,
Such sudden mirth, he knows not why,
So many curiosities!

As life about him, by degrees
Discloses all its pageantries
He watches with approval shy
At two years old.

With wonders tired he takes his ease
At dusk, upon his mother's knees:
A little laugh, a little cry,
Put toys to bed, then "seepy-bye"—
The world is made of such as these
At two years old.



A Birthday

KEATS

(1821-1921)

WHEN sometimes, on a moony night, I've
passed

A street-lamp, seen my doubled shadow flee,
I've noticed how much darker, clearer cast,
The full moon poured her silhouette of me.

Just so of spirits. Beauty's silver light
Limns with a ray more pure, and tenderer too:
Men's clumsy gestures, to unearthly sight,
Surpass the shapes they show by human view.

On this brave world, where few such meteors fell,
Her youngest son, to save us, Beauty flung.
He suffered and descended into hell—
And comforts yet the ardent and the young.

Drunken of moonlight, dazed by draughts of sky,
Dizzy with stars, his mortal fever ran:
His utterance a moon-enchanted cry
Not free from folly—for he too was man.

[111]

C H I M N E Y S M O K E

And now and here, a hundred years away,
Where topless towers shadow golden streets,
The young men sit, nooked in a cheap café,
Perfectly happy . . . talking about Keats.

TO H. F. M.

A SONNET IN SUNLIGHT

THIS is a day for sonnets: Oh how clear
Our splendid cliffs and summits lift the
gaze—

If all the perfect moments of the year
Were poured and gathered in one sudden blaze,
Then, then perhaps, in some endowered phrase
My flat strewn words would rise and come more
near

To tell of you. Your beauty and your praise
Would fall like sunlight on this paper here.

Then I would build a sonnet that would stand
Proud and perennial on this pale bright sky;
So tall, so steep, that it might stay the hand
Of Time, the dusty wrecker. He would sigh
To tear my strong words down. And he would
say:

“That song he built for her, one summer day.”

QUICKENING

SUCH little, puny things are words in rhyme:
 Poor feeble loops and strokes as frail as
 hairs;

You see them printed here, and mark their chime,
 And turn to your more durable affairs.

Yet on such petty tools the poet dares
 To run his race with mortar, bricks and lime,
 And draws his frail stick to the point, and stares
 To aim his arrow at the heart of Time.

Intangible, yet pressing, hemming in,
 This measured emptiness engulfs us all,
 And yet he points his paper javelin
 And sees it eddy, waver, turn, and fall,
 And feels, between delight and trouble torn,
 The stirring of a sonnet still unborn.

AT A WINDOW SILL

TO WRITE a sonnet needs a quiet mind....
 I paused and pondered, tried again. *To*
write. . . .

Raising the sash, I breathed the winter night:
 Papers and small hot room were left behind.
 Against the gusty purple, ribbed and spined
 With golden slots and vertebræ of light
 Men's cages loomed. Down sliding from a height
 An elevator winked as it declined.

Coward! There is no quiet in the brain—
 If pity burns it not, then beauty will:
 Tinder it is for every blowing spark.
 Uncertain whether this is bliss or pain
 The unresting mind will gaze across the sill
 From high apartment windows, in the dark.

THE RIVER OF LIGHT

I. Broadway, 103rd to 96th.

LIGHTS foam and bubble down the gentle
grade:

Bright shine chop sueys and rôtisseries;
In pink translucence glowingly displayed
See camisole and stocking and chemise.
Delicatessen windows full of cheese—
Above, the chimes of church-bells toll and fade—
And then, from off some distant Palisade
That gluey savor on the Jersey breeze!

The burning bulbs, in green and white and red,
Spell out a *Change of Program Sun., Wed., Fri.*,
A clicking taxi spins with ruby spark.
There is a sense of poisoning near the head
Of some great flume of brightness, flowing by
To pour in gathering torrent through the dark.

THE RIVER OF LIGHT

II. Below 96th

THE current quickens, and in golden flow
Hurries its flotsam downward through the
night—

Here are the rapids where the undertow
Whirls endless motors in a gleaming flight.
From blazing tributaries, left and right,
Influent streams of blue and amber grow.
Columbus Circle eddies: all below
Is pouring flame, a gorge of broken light.

See how the burning river boils in spate,
Channeled by cliffs of insane jewelry,
Painting a rosy roof on cloudy air—
And just about ten minutes after eight,
Tossing a surf of color to the sky
It bursts in cataracts upon Times Square!

OF HER GLORIOUS MADNESS

THE city's mad: through her prodigious veins
 What errant, strange, eccentric humors
 thrill:

Day, when her cataracts of sunlight spill—
 Night, golden-panelled with her window panes;
 The toss of wind-blown skirts; and who can drill
 Forever his fierce heart with checking reins?
 Cruel and mad, my statisticians say—
 Ah, but she raves in such a gallant way!

Brave madness, built for beauty and the sun—
 In such a town who can be sane? Not I.
 Of clashing colors all her moods are spun—
 A scarlet anger and a golden cry.
 This frantic town where madcap mischiefs run
 They ask to take the veil, and be a nun!

IN AN AUCTION ROOM

(*Letter of John Keats to Fanny Brawne, Anderson Galleries, March 15, 1920.*)

To Dr. A. S. W. Rosenbach.

*H*OW about this lot? said the auctioneer;
One hundred, may I say, just for a start?
 Between the plum-red curtains, drawn apart,
 A written sheet was held. . . . And strange to
 hear
 (Dealer, would I were steadfast as thou art)
 The cold quick bids. (*Against you in the rear!*)
 The crimson salon, in a glow more clear
 Burned bloodlike purple as the poet's heart.

Song that outgrew the singer! Bitter Love
 That broke the proud hot heart it held in thrall;
 Poor script, where still those tragic passions
 move—

Eight hundred bid: fair warning: the last call:
 The soul of Adonais, like a star. . . .
Sold for eight hundred dollars—Doctor R.!

EPITAPH FOR A POET WHO WROTE NO POETRY

"It is said that a poet has died young in the breast
of the most stolid."—Robert Louis Stevenson.

WHAT was the service of this poet? He
Who blinked the blinding dazzle-rays that
run

Where life profiles its edges to the sun,
And still suspected much he could not see.
Clay-stopped, yet in his taciturnity
There lay the vein of glory, known to none;
And moods of secret smiling, only won
When peace and passion, time and sense, agree.

Fighting the world he loved for chance to brood,
Ignorant when to embrace, when to avoid
His loves that held him in their vital clutch—
This was his service, his beatitude;
This was the inward trouble he enjoyed
Who knew so little, and who felt so much.

SONNET BY A GEOMETER

THE CIRCLE

FEW things are perfect: we bear Eden's scar;
 Yet faulty man was godlike in design
 That day when first, with stick and length of
 twine,
 He drew me on the sand. Then what could mar
 His joy in that obedient mystic line;
 And then, computing with a zeal divine,
 He called π 3-point-14159
 And knew my lovely circuit $2 \pi r$!

A circle is a happy thing to be—
 Think how the joyful perpendicular
 Erected at the kiss of tangency
 Must meet my central point, my avatar!
 They talk of 14 points: yet only 3
 Determine every circle: Q. E. D.

TO A VAUDEVILLE TERRIER
SEEN ON A LEASH, IN THE PARK

THREE times a day—at two, at seven, at
nine—

O terrier, you play your little part:
Absurd in coat and skirt you push a cart,
With inner anguish walk a tight-rope line.
Up there, before the hot and dazzling shine
You must be rigid servant of your art,
Nor watch those fluffy cats—your doggish heart
Might leap and then betray you with a whine!

But sometimes, when you've faithfully rehearsed,
Your trainer takes you walking in the park,
Straining to sniff the grass, to chase a frog.
The leash is slipped, and then your joy will
burst—
Adorable it is to run and bark,
To be—alas, how seldom—just a dog!



You must be rigid servant of your art!

TO AN OLD FRIEND

(For Lloyd Williams.)

I LIKE to dream of some established spot
Where you and I, old friend, an evening
 through
Under tobacco's fog, streaked gray and blue,
Might reconsider laughters unforgot.
Beside a hearth-glow, golden-clear and hot,
I'd hear you tell the oddities men do.
The clock would tick, and we would sit, we two—
Life holds such meetings for us, does it not?

Happy are men when they have learned to prize
The sure unvarnished virtue of their friends,
The unchanged kindness of a well-known face:
On old fidelities our world depends,
And runs a simple course in honest wise,
Not a mere taxicab shot wild through space!

TO A BURLESQUE SOUBRETTE

UPSTAGE the great high-shafted beefy choir
 Squawked in 2000 watts of orange glare—
 You came, and impudent and deuce-may-care
 Danced where the gutter flamed with footlight
 fire.

Flung from the roof, spots red and yellow burned
 And followed you. The blatant brassy clang
 Of instruments drowned out the words you
 sang,
 But goldenly you capered, twirled and turned.

Boyish and slender, child-limbed, quick and
 proud,
 A sprite of irresistible disdain,
 Fair as a jonquil in an April rain,
 You seemed too sweet an imp for that dull
 crowd. . . .

And then, behind the scenes, I heard you say,
"O Gawd, I got a hellish cold to-day!"



*You came, and impudent and deuce-may-care
Danced where the gutter flamed with footlight fire.*

THOUGHTS WHILE PACKING A TRUNK

THE sonnet is a trunk, and you must pack
 With care, to ship frail baggage far away;
 The octet is the trunk; sestet, the tray;
 Tight, but not overloaded, is the knack.
 First, at the bottom, heavy thoughts you stack,
 And in the chinks your adjectives you lay—
 Your phrases, folded neatly as you may,
 Stowing a syllable in every crack.

Then, in the tray, your daintier stuff is hid:
 The tender quatrain where your moral sings—
 Be careful, though, lest as you close the lid
 You crush and crumple all these fragile things.
 Your couplet snaps the hasps and turns the key—
 Ship to The Editor, marked C. O. D.

STREETS

I HAVE seen streets where strange enchantment broods:

Old ruddy houses where the morning shone
In seemly quiet on their tranquil moods,
Across the sills white curtains outward blown.
Their marble steps were scoured as white as bone
Where scrubbing housemaids toiled on wounded
knee—

And yet, among all streets that I have known
These placid byways give least peace to me.

In such a house, where green light shining through
(From some back garden) framed her silhouette
I saw a girl, heard music blithely sung.
She stood there laughing, in a dress of blue,
And as I went on, slowly, there I met
An old, old woman, who had once been young.

TO THE ONLY BEGETTER

I

I HAVE no hope to make you live in rhyme
 Or with your beauty to enrich the years—
 Enough for me this now, this present time;
 The greater claim for greater sonneteers.
 But O how covetous I am of NOW—
 Dear human minutes, marred by human pains—
 I want to know your lips, your cheek, your brow,
 And all the miracles your heart contains,
 I wish to study all your changing face,
 Your eyes, divinely hurt with tenderness;
 I hope to win your dear unstinted grace
 For these blunt rhymes and what they would
 express.

Then may you say, when others better prove:—
"Theirs for their style I'll read, his for his love."

TO THE ONLY BEGETTER

II

WHEN all my trivial rhymes are blotted out,
Vanished our days, so precious and so few,
If some should wonder what we were about
And what the little happenings we knew:
I wish that they might know how, night by night,
My pencil, heavy in the sleepy hours,
Sought vainly for some gracious way to write
How much this love is ours, and only ours.
How many evenings, as you drowsed to sleep,
I read to you by tawny candle-glow,
And watched you down the valley dim and deep
Where poppies and the April flowers grow.
Then knelt beside your pillow with a prayer,
And loved the breath of pansies in your hair.

PEDOMETER

MY thoughts beat out in sonnets while I
walk,

And every evening on the homeward street

I find the rhythm of my marching feet

Throbs into verses (though the rhyme may balk).

I think the sonneteers were walking men:

The form is dour and rigid, like a clamp,

But with the swing of legs the tramp, tramp,
tramp

Of syllables begins to thud, and then—

Lo! while you seek a rhyme for *hook* or *crook*

Vanished your shabby coat, and you are kith

To all great walk-and-singers—Meredith,

And Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Keats, and Ru-
pert Brooke!

Free verse is poor for walking, but a sonnet—

O marvellous to stride and brood upon it!

HOSTAGES

“He that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune.”—BACON.

AYE, Fortune, thou hast hostage of my best!
 I, that was once so heedless of thy frown,
 Have armed thee cap-à-pie to strike me down,
 Have given thee blades to hold against my breast.
 My virtue, that was once all self-possessed,
 Is parceled out in little hands, and brown
 Bright eyes, and in a sleeping baby's gown:
 To threaten these will put me to the test.

Sure, since there are these pitiful poor chinks
 Upon the makeshift armor of my heart,
 For thee no honor lies in such a fight!
 And thou wouldst shame to vanquish one, me-
 thinks,
 Who came awake with such a painful start
 To hear the coughing of a child at night.



Hostages.

ARS DURA

HOW many evenings, walking soberly
Along our street all dappled with rich sun,
I please myself with words, and happily
Time rhymes to footfalls, planning how they run;
And yet, when midnight comes, and paper lies
Clean, white, receptive, all that one can ask,
Alas for drowsy spirit, weary eyes
And traitor hand that fails the well loved task!

Who ever learned the sonnet's bitter craft
But he had put away his sleep, his ease,
The wine he loved, the men with whom he
 laughed
To brood upon such thankless tricks as these?
And yet, such joy does in that craft abide
He greets the paper as the groom the bride!

O. HENRY—APOTHECARY

(“O. Henry” once worked in a drug-store in Greensboro, N. C.)

WHERE once he measured camphor, glycerine,
Quinine and potash, peppermint in bars,
And all the oils and essences so keen
That druggists keep in rows of stoppered jars—
Now, blender of strange drugs more volatile,
The master pharmacist of joy and pain
Dispenses sadness tintured with a smile
And laughter that dissolves in tears again.

O brave apothecary! You who knew
What dark and acid doses life prefers
And yet with friendly face resolved to brew
These sparkling potions for your customers—
In each prescription your Physician writ
You poured your rich compassion and your wit!

FOR THE CENTENARY OF KEATS'S
SONNET (1816)

“On First Looking Into Chapman’s Homer.”

I KNEW a scientist, an engineer,
Student of tensile strengths and calculus,
A man who loved a cantilever truss
And always wore a pencil on his ear.
My friend believed that poets all were queer,
And literary folk ridiculous;
But one night, when it chanced that three of us
Were reading Keats aloud, he stopped to hear.

Lo, a new planet swam into his ken!
His eager mind reached for it and took hold.
Ten years are by: I see him now and then,
And at alumni dinners, if cajoled,
He mumbles gravely, to the cheering men:—
Much have I travelled in the realms of gold.

TWO O'CLOCK

NIGHT after night goes by: and clocks still
chime

And stars are changing patterns in the dark,
And watches tick, and over-puissant Time
Benumbs the eager brain. The dogs that bark,
The trains that roar and rattle in the night,
The very cats that prowl, all quiet find
And leave the darkness empty, silent quite:
Sleep comes to chloroform the fretting mind.

So all things end: and what is left at last?
Some scribbled sonnets tossed upon the floor,
A memory of easy days gone past,
A run-down watch, a pipe, some clothes we
wore—
And in the darkened room I lean to know
How warm her dreamless breath does pause
and flow.

THE COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER

AH very sweet! If news should come to you
Some afternoon, while waiting for our eve,
That the great Manager had made me leave
To travel on some territory new;
And that, whatever homeward winds there blew,
I could not touch your hand again, nor heave
The logs upon our hearth and bid you weave
Some wistful tale before the flames that grew. . . .

Then, when the sudden tears had ceased to blind
Your pansied eyes, I wonder if you could
Remember rightly, and forget aright?
Remember just your lad, uncouthly good,
Forgetting when he failed in spleen or spite?
Could you remember him as always kind?

THE WEDDED LOVER

I READ in our old journals of the days
When our first love was April-sweet and new,
How fair it blossomed and deep-rooted grew
Despite the adverse time; and our amaze
At moon and stars and beauty beyond praise
That burgeoned all about us: gold and blue
The heaven arched us in, and all we knew
Was gentleness. We walked on happy ways.

They said by now the path would be more steep,
The sunsets paler and less mild the air;
Rightly we heeded not: it was not true.
We will not tell the secret—let it keep.
I know not how I thought those days so fair
These being so much fairer, spent with you.

TO YOU, REMEMBERING THE PAST

WHEN we were parted, sweet, and darkness
came,

I used to strike a match, and hold the flame
Before your picture and would breathless mark
The answering glimmer of the tiny spark
That brought to life the magic of your eyes,
Their wistful tenderness, their glad surprise.

Holding that mimic torch before your shrine
I used to light your eyes and make them mine;
Watch them like stars set in a lonely sky,
Whisper my heart out, yearning for reply;
Summon your lips from far across the sea
Bidding them live a twilight hour with me.

Then, when the match was shrivelled into gloom,
Lo—you were with me in the darkened room.

CHARLES AND MARY

(December 27, 1834.)

Lamb died just before I left town, and Mr. Ryle of the E. India House, one of his extors., notified it to me. . . . He said Miss L. was resigned and composed at the event, but it was from her malady, then in mild type, so that when she saw her brother dead, she observed on his beauty when asleep and apprehended nothing further.

—Letter of John Rickman, 24 January, 1835.

I HEAR their voices still: the stammering one
 Struggling with some absurdity of jest;
 Her quiet words that puzzle and protest
 Against the latest outrage of his fun.
 So wise, so simple—has she never guessed
 That through his laughter, love and terror run?
 For when her trouble came, and darkness pressed,
 He smiled, and fought her madness with a pun.

Through all those years it was his task to keep
 Her gentle heart serenely mystified.
 If Fate's an artist, this should be his pride—
 When, in that Christmas season, he lay dead,
 She innocently looked. "I always said
 That Charles is really handsome when asleep."

TO A GRANDMOTHER

AT six o'clock in the evening,
The time for lullabies,
My son lay on my mother's lap
With sleepy, sleepy eyes!
(*O drowsy little manny boy,*
With sleepy, sleepy eyes!)

I heard her sing, and rock him,
And the creak of the swaying chair,
And the old dear cadence of the words
Came softly down the stair.

And all the years had vanished,
All folly, greed, and stain—
The old, old song, the creaking chair,
The dearest arms again!
(*O lucky little manny boy,*
To feel those arms again!)

DIARISTS

THEY catalogue their minutes: Now, now,
now,
Is Actual, amid the fugitive;
Take ink and pen (they say) for that is how
We snare this flying life, and make it live.
So to their little pictures, and they sieve
Their happinesses: fields turned by the plough,
The afterglow that summer sunsets give,
The razor concave of a great ship's bow.

O gallant instinct, folly for men's mirth!
Type cannot burn and sparkle on the page.
No glittering ink can make this written word
Shine clear enough to speak the noble rage
And instancy of life. All sonnets blurred
The sudden mood of truth that gave them
birth.

THE LAST SONNET

SUPPOSE one knew that never more might
one

Put pen to sonnet, well loved task; that now
These fourteen lines were all he could allow
To say his message, be forever done;
How he would scan the word, the line, the rhyme,
Intent to sum in dearly chosen phrase
The windy trees, the beauty of his days,
Life's pride and pathos in one verse sublime.
How bitter then would be regret and pang
For former rhymes he dallied to refine,
For every verse that was not crystalline. . . .
And if belike this last one feebly rang,
Honor and pride would cast it to the floor
Facing the judge with what was done before.

THE SAVAGE

CIVILIZATION causes me
Alternate fits: disgust and glee.

Buried in piles of glass and stone
My private spirit moves alone,

Where every day from eight to six
I keep alive by hasty tricks.

But I am simple in my soul;
My mind is sullen to control.

At dusk I smell the scent of earth,
And I am dumb—too glad for mirth.

I know the savors night can give,
And then, and then, I live, I live!

No man is wholly pure and free,
For that is not his destiny,

But though I bend, I will not break:
And still be savage, for Truth's sake.

God damns the easily convinced
(Like Pilate, when his hands he rinsed).

ST. PAUL'S AND WOOLWORTH

I STOOD on the pavement
Where I could admire
Behind the brown chapel
The cream and gold spire.

Above, gilded Lightning
Swam high on his ball—
I saw the noon shadow
The church of St. Paul.

And was there a meaning?
(My fancy would run),
Saint Paul in the shadow,
Saint Frank in the sun!

ADVICE TO A CITY

O CITY, cage your poets! Hem them in
 And roof them over from the April sky—
 Clatter them round with babble, ceaseless din,
 And drown their voices with your thunder cry.

Forbid their free feet on the windy hills,
 And harness them to daily ruts of stone—
 (In florists' windows lock the daffodils)
 And never, never let them be alone!

For they are curst, said poets, curst and lewd,
 And freedom gives their tongues uncanny wit,
 And granted silence, thought and solitude
 They (*absit omen!*) might make Song of it.

So cage them in, and stand about them thick,
 And keep them busy with their daily bread;
 And should their eyes seem strange, ah, then be
 quick

To interrupt them ere the word be said. . . .

For, if their hearts burn with sufficient rage,
 With wasted sunsets and frustrated youth,
 Some day they'll cry, on some disturbing page,
 The savage, sweet, unpalatable truth!

THE TELEPHONE DIRECTORY

NO MALORY of old romance,
No Crusoe tale, it seems to me,
Can equal in rich circumstance
This telephone directory.

No ballad of fair ladies' eyes,
No legend of proud knights and dames,
Can fill me with such bright surmise
As this great book of numbered names!

How many hearts and lives unknown,
Rare damsels pining for a squire,
Are waiting for the telephone
To ring, and call them to the wire.

Some wait to hear a loved voice say
The news they will rejoice to know
At Rome 2637 J
Or Marathon 1450!

CHIMNEYSMOKE

And some, perhaps, are stung with fear
And answer with reluctant tread:
The message they expect to hear
Means life or death or daily bread.

A million hearts here wait our call,
All naked to our distant speech—
I wish that I could ring them all
And have some welcome news for each!

GREEN ESCAPE

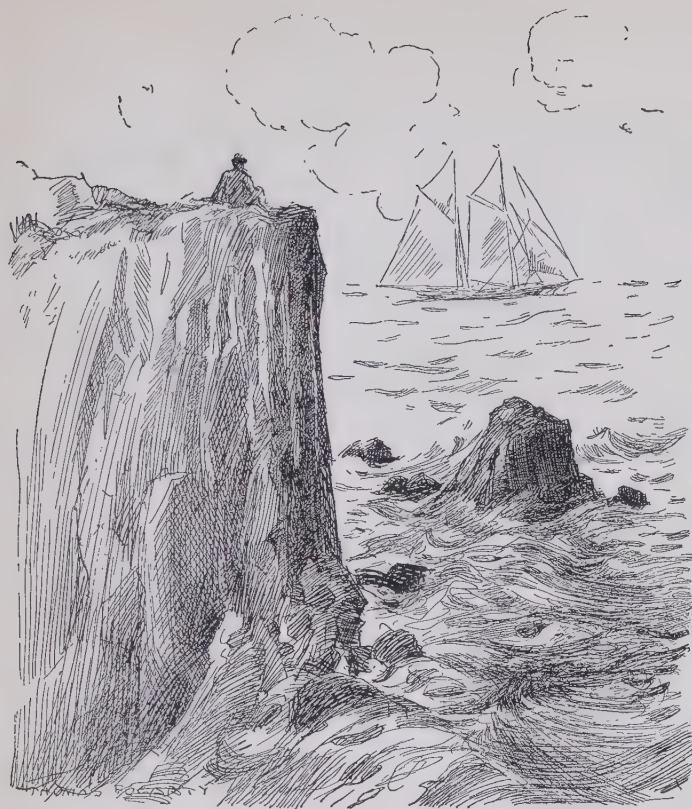
AT three o'clock in the afternoon
 On a hot September day,
 I began to dream of a highland stream
 And a frostbit russet tree;
 Of the swashing dip of a clipper ship
 (White canvas wet with spray)
 And the swirling green and milk-foam clean
 Along her canted lee.

I heard the quick staccato click
 Of the typist's pounding keys,
 And I had to brood of a wind more rude
 Than that by a motor fanned—
 And I lay inert in a flannel shirt
 To watch the rhyming seas
 Deploy and fall in a silver sprawl
 On a beach of sun-blached sand.

There is no desk shall tame my lust
 For hills and windy skies;
 My secret hope of the sea's blue slope
 No clerkly task shall dull;

And though I print no echoed hint
Of adventures I devise,
My eyes still pine for the comely line
Of an outbound vessel's hull.

When I elope with an autumn day
And make my green escape,
I'll leave my pen to tamer men
Who have more docile souls;
For forest aisles and office files
Have a very different shape,
And it's hard to woo the ocean blue
In a row of pigeon holes!



*My eyes still pine for the comely line
Of an outbound vessel's hull.*

VESPER SONG FOR COMMUTERS

(Instead of "Marathon," the commuter may substitute the name of his favorite suburb)

THE stars are kind to Marathon,
 How low, how close, they lean!
 They jostle one another
 And do their best to please—
 Indeed, they are so neighborly
 That in the twilight green
 One reaches out to pick them
 Behind the poplar trees.

The stars are kind to Marathon,
 And one particular
 Bright planet (which is Vesper)
 Most lucid and serene,
 Is waiting by the railway bridge,
 The Good Commuter's Star,
 The Star of Wise Men coming home
 On time, at 6:15!

THE ICE WAGON

I'D like to split the sky that roofs us down,
Break through the crystal lid of upper air,
And tap the cool still reservoirs of heaven.
I'd empty all those unseen lakes of freshness
Down some vast funnel, through our stifled
streets.

I'd like to pump away the grit, the dust,
Raw dazzle of the sun on garbage piles,
The droning troops of flies, sharp bitter smells,
And gush that bright sweet flood of unused air
Down every alley where the children gasp.

And then I'd take a fleet of ice wagons—
Big yellow creaking carts, drawn by wet horses,—
And drive them rumbling through the blazing
slums.

In every wagon would be blocks of coldness,
Pale, gleaming cubes of ice, all green and silver,
With inner veins and patterns, white and frosty;
Great lumps of chill would drip and steam and
shimmer,

And spark like rainbows in their little fractures.

And where my wagons stood there would be
puddles,

A wetness and a sparkle and a coolness.

My friends and I would chop and splinter open
The blocks of ice. Bare feet would soon come
pattering,

And some would wrap it up in Sunday papers,
And some would stagger home with it in baskets,
And some would be too gay for aught but sucking,
Licking, crunching those fast melting pebbles,
Gulping as they slipped down unexpected—
Laughing to perceive that secret numbness
Amid their small hot persons!

At every stop would be at least one urchin
Would take a piece to cool the sweating horses
And hold it up against their silky noses—
And they would start, and then decide they
liked it.

Down all the sun-cursed byways of the town
Our wagons would be trailed by grimy tots,
Their ragged shirts half off them with excitement!
Dabbling toes and fingers in our leakage,
A lucky few up sitting with the driver,
All clambering and stretching grey-pink palms.

And by the time the wagons were all empty
Our arms and shoulders would be lame with
 chopping,
Our backs and thighs pain-shot, our fingers frozen.
But how we would recall those eager faces,
Red thirsty tongues with ice-chips sliding on
 them,
The pinched white cheeks, and their pathetic
 gladness.
Then we would know that arms were made for
 aching—

I wish to God that I could go to-morrow!

AT A MOVIE THEATRE

HOW well he spoke who coined the phrase
The picture palace! Aye, in sooth
 A palace, where men's weary days
 Are crowned with kingliness of youth.

Strange palace! Crowded, airless, dim,
 Where toes are trod and strained eyes smart,
 We watch a wand of brightness limn
 The old heroics of the heart.

Romance again hath us in thrall
 And Love is sweet and always true,
 And in the darkness of the hall
 Hands clasp—as they were meant to do.

Remote from peevish joys and ills
 Our souls, *pro tem*, are purged and free:
 We see the sun on western hills,
 The crumbling tumult of the sea.

CHIMNEYSMOKE

We are the blond that maidens crave,
Well balanced at a dozen banks;
By sleight of hand we haste to save
A brown-eyed life, nor stay for thanks!

Alas, perhaps our instinct feels
Life is not all it might have been,
So we applaud fantastic reels
Of shadow, cast upon a screen!

SONNETS IN A LODGING HOUSE

I

EACH morn she crackles upward, tread by
tread,

All apprehensive of some hideous sight:

Perhaps the Fourth Floor Back, who reads in bed,

Forgot his gas and let it burn all night—

The Sweet Young Thing who has the middle
room,

She much suspects: for once some ink was
spilled,

And then the plumber, in an hour of gloom,

Found all the bathroom pipes with tea-leaves
filled.

No League of Nations scheme can make her gay—

She knows the rank duplicity of man;

Some folks expect clean towels every day,

They'll get away with murder if they can!

She tacks a card (alas, few roomers mind it)

Please leave the tub as you would wish to find it!

II

Men lodgers are the best, the Mrs. said:
They don't use my gas jets to fry sardines,
They don't leave red-hot irons on the spread,
They're out all morning, when a body cleans.
A man ain't so secretive, never cares
What kind of private papers he leaves lay,
So I can get a line on his affairs
And dope out whether he is likely pay.
But women! Say, they surely get my bug!
They stop their keyholes up with chewing gum,
Spill grease, and hide the damage with the rug,
And fry marshmallows when their callers come.
They always are behindhand with their rents—
Take my advice and let your rooms to gents!



*A man ain't so secretive, never cares
What kind of private papers he leaves lay—*

THE MAN WITH THE HOE (PRESS)

ABOUT these roaring cylinders
 Where leaping words and paper mate,
 A sudden glory moves and stirs—
 An inky cataract in spate!

What voice for falsehood or for truth,
 What hearts attentive to be stirred—
 How dimly understood, in sooth,
 The power of the printed word!

These flashing webs and cogs of steel
 Have shaken empires, routed kings,
 Yet never turn too fast to feel
 The tragedies of humble things.

O words, be strict in honesty,
 Be just and simple and serene;
 O rhymes, sing true, or you will be
 Unworthy of this great machine!

DO YOU EVER FEEL LIKE GOD?

ACROSS the court there rises the back wall
 Of the Magna Carta Apartments.
 The other evening the people in the apartment
 opposite
 Had forgotten to draw their curtains.
 I could see them dining: the well-blanch'd cloth,
 The silver and glass, the crystal water jug,
 The meat and vegetables; and their clean pink
 hands
 Outstretched in busy gesture.

It was pleasant to watch them, they were so
 human;
 So gay, innocent, unconscious of scrutiny.
 They were four: an elderly couple,
 A young man, and a girl—with lovely shoulders
 Mellow in the glow of the lamp.
 They were sitting over coffee, and I could see their
 hands talking.

At last the older two left the room.
 The boy and girl looked at each other. . . .
 Like a flash, they leaned and kissed.

CHIMNEYSMOKE

Good old human race that keeps on multiplying!
A little later I went down the street to the movies,
And there I saw all four, laughing and joking
together.

And as I watched them I felt like God—
Benevolent, all-knowing, and tender.

RAPID TRANSIT

(To Stephen Vincent Benét.)

CLIMBING is easy and swift on Parnassus!
 Knocking my pipe out, I entered a book-
 shop;

There found a book of verse by a young poet.
 Comrades at once, how I saw his mind glowing!
 Saw in his soul its magnificent rioting—
 Then I ran with him on hills that were windy,
 Basked and laughed with him on sun-dazzled
 beaches,

Glutted myself on his green and blue twilights,
 Watched him disposing his planets in patterns,
 Tumbling his colors and toys all before him.
 I questioned life with him, his pulses my pulses;
 Doubted his doubts, too, and grieved for his an-
 guishes.

Salted long kinship and knew him from boy-
 hood—

Pulled out my own sun and stars from my knap-
 sack,

Trying my trinkets with those of his finding—

And as I left the bookshop

My pipe was still warm in my hand.

CAUGHT IN THE UNDERTOW

COLIN, worshipping some frail,
By self-deprecation sways her:
Calls himself unworthy male,
Hardly even fit to praise her.

But this tactic insincere
In the upshot greatly grieves him
When he finds the lovely dear
Quite implicitly believes him.

TO HIS BROWN-EYED MISTRESS

*Who Rallied Him for Praising Blue Eyes in His
Verses*

IF SOMETIMES, in a random phrase
 (For variation in my ditty),
 I chance blue eyes, or gray, to praise
 And seem to intimate them pretty—

It is because I do not dare
 With too unmixed reiteration
 To sing the browner eyes and hair
 That are my true intoxication.

Know, then, that I consider brown
 For ladies' eyes, the only color;
 And deem all other orbs in town
 (Compared to yours), opaquer, duller.

I pray, perpend, my dearest dear;
 While blue-eyed maids the praise were
 drinking,
 How insubstantial was their cheer—
 It was of yours that I was thinking!
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PEACE

WHAT is this Peace
That statesmen sign?
How I have sought
To make it mine.

Where groaning cities
Clang and glow
I hunted, hunted,
Peace to know.

And still I saw
Where I passed by
Discarded hearts,—
Heard children cry.

By willowed waters
Brimmed with rain
I thought to capture
Peace again.

I sat me down
My Peace to hoard,
But Beauty pricked me
With a sword.

CHIMNEYSMOKE

For in the stillness
 Something stirred,
And I was crippled
 For a word.

There is no peace
 A man can find;
The anguish sits
 His heart behind.

The eyes he loves,
 The perfect breast,
Too exquisite
 To give him rest.

This is his curse
 Since brain began.
His penalty
 For being man.

May, 1919

SONG, IN DEPRECATION
OF PULCHRITUDE

BEAUTY (so the poets say),
Thou art joy and solace great;
Long ago, and far away
Thou art safe to contemplate,

Beauty. But when now and here,
Visible and close to touch,
All too perilously near,
Thou tormentest us too much!

In a picture, in a song,
In a novel's conjured scenes,
Beauty, that's where you belong,
Where perspective intervenes.

But, my dear, in rosy fact
Your appeal I have to shirk—
You disturb me, and distract
My attention from my work!

MOUNTED POLICE

WATCHFUL, grave, he sits astride his
horse,

Draped with his rubber poncho, in the rain;
He speaks the pungent lingo of "The Force,"
And those who try to bluff him, try in vain.

Inured to every mood of fool and crank,
Shrewdly and sternly all the crowd he cons:
The rain drips down his horse's shining flank,
A figure nobly fit for sculptor's bronze.

O knight commander of our city stress,
Little you know how picturesque you are!
We hear you cry to drivers who transgress:
"Say, that's a helva place to park your car!"



Mounted Police.

TO HIS MISTRESS, DEPLORING THAT
HE IS NOT AN ELIZABETHAN GALAXY

WHY did not Fate to me bequeath an
Utterance Elizabethan?

It would have been delight to me
If *natus ante* 1603.

My stuff would not be soon forgotten
If I could write like Harry Wotton.

I wish that I could wield the pen
Like William Drummond of Hawthornden.

I would not fear the ticking clock
If I were Browne of 'Tavistock.

For blithe conceits I would not worry
If I were Raleigh, or the Earl of Surrey.

I wish (I hope I am not silly?)
That I could juggle words like Lyly.

I envy many a lyric champion,
I. e., viz., e. g., Thomas Campion.

I creak my rhymes up like a derrick,
I ne'er will be a Robin Herrick.

My wits are dull as an old Barlow—
I wish that I were Christopher Marlowe.

In short, I'd like to be Philip Sidney,
Or some one else of that same kidney.

For if I were, my lady's looks
And all my lyric special pleading
Would be in all the future books,
And called, at college, *Required Reading*.

THE INTRUDER

AS I sat, to sift my dreaming
To the meet and needed word,
Came a merry Interruption
With insistence to be heard.

Smiling stood a maid beside me,
Half alluring and half shy;
Soft the white hint of her bosom—
Escapade was in her eye.

"I must not be so invaded,"
(In an anger then I cried)—
"Can't you see that I am busy?
Tempting creature, stay outside!"

"Pearly rascal, I am writing:
I am now composing verse—
Fie on antic invitation:
Wanton, vanish—fly—disperse!"

"Baggage, in my godlike moment
What have I to do with thee?"
And she laughed as she departed—
"I am Poetry," said she.

TIT FOR TAT

I OFTEN pass a gracious tree
Whose name I can't identify,
But still I bow, in courtesy
It waves a bough, in kind reply.

I do not know your name, O tree
(Are you a hemlock or a pine?)
But why should that embarrass me?
Quite probably you don't know mine.



Courtesy

SONG FOR A LITTLE HOUSE

I'M glad our house is a little house,
Not too tall nor too wide:
I'm glad the hovering butterflies
Feel free to come inside.

Our little house is a friendly house.
It is not shy or vain;
It gossips with the talking trees,
And makes friends with the rain.

And quick leaves cast a shimmer of green
Against our whited walls,
And in the phlox, the courteous bees
Are paying duty calls.

THE PLUMPUPPETS

WHEN little heads weary have gone to their
 bed,
 When all the good nights and the prayers have
 been said,
 Of all the good fairies that send bairns to rest
 The little Plumpuppets are those I love best.

*If your pillow is lumpy, or hot, thin and flat,
 The little Plumpuppets know just what they're
 at;
 They plump up the pillow, all soft, cool and fat—
 The little Plumpuppets plump-up it!*

The little Plumpuppets are fairies of beds:
 They have nothing to do but to watch sleepy
 heads;
 They turn down the sheets and they tuck you in
 tight,
 And they dance on your pillow to wish you good
 night!
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The Plumpuppets

CHIMNEYSMOKE

No matter what troubles have bothered the day,
Though your doll broke her arm or the pup ran
away;

Though your handies are black with the ink that
was spilt—

Plumpuppets are waiting in blanket and quilt.

*If your pillow is lumpy, or hot, thin and flat,
The little Plumpuppets know just what they're
at;*

*They plump up the pillow, all soft, cool and fat—
The little Plumpuppets plump-up it!*

DANDY DANDELION

WHEN Dandy Dandelion wakes
And combs his yellow hair,
The ant his cup of dewdrop takes
And sets his bed to air;
The worm hides in a quilt of dirt
To keep the thrush away,
The beetle dons his pansy shirt—
They know that it is day!

And caterpillars haste to milk
The cowslips in the grass;
The spider, in his web of silk,
Looks out for flies that pass.
These humble people leap from bed,
They know the night is done:
When Dandy spreads his golden head
They think he is the sun!

CHIMNEYSMOKE

Dear Dandy truly does not smell

As sweet as some bouquets;

No florist gathers him to sell,

He withers in a vase;

Yet in the grass he's emperor,

And lord of high renown;

And grateful little folk adore

His bright and shining crown.

THE HIGH CHAIR

GRIMLY the parent matches wit and will:
 Now, Weesy, three more spoons! See
 Tom the cat,
He'd drink it. You want to be big and fat
 Like Daddy, don't you? (Careful now, don't
 spill!)
 Yes, Daddy'll dance, and blow smoke through his
 nose,
 But you must finish first. Come, drink it up—
 (*Splash!*) Oh, you *must* keep both hands on the
 cup.
 All gone? Now for the prunes. . . .
 And so it goes.

This is the battlefield that parents know,
 Where one small splinter of old Adam's rib
 Withstands an entire household offering spoons.
 No use to gnash your teeth. For she will go
 Radiant to bed, glossy from crown to bib
 With milk and cereal and a surf of prunes.

LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT

NOT long ago I fell in love,
But unreturned is my affection—
The girl that I'm enamored of
Pays little heed in my direction.

I thought I knew her fairly well:
In fact, I'd had my arm around her;
And so it's hard to have to tell
How unresponsive I have found her.

For, though she is not frankly rude,
Her manners quite the wrong way rub me:
It seems to me ingratitude
To let me love her—and then snub me!

Though I'm considerate and fond,
She shows no gladness when she spies me—
She gazes off somewhere beyond
And doesn't even recognize me.

Her eyes, so candid, calm and blue,
Seem asking if I can support her
In the style appropriate to
A lady like her father's daughter.

Well, if I can't then no one can—
And let me add that I intend to:
She'll never know another man
So fit for her to be a friend to.

Not love me, eh? She better had!
By Jove, I'll make her love me one day;
For, don't you see, I am her Dad,
And she'll be three weeks old on Sunday!



*. . . It's hard to have to tell
How unresponsive I have found her.*

AUTUMN COLORS

THE chestnut trees turned yellow,
The oak like sherry browned,
The fir, the stubborn fellow,
Stayed green the whole year round.

But O the bonny maple
How richly he does shine!
He glows against the sunset
Like ruddy old port wine.

THE LAST CRICKET

WHEN the bulb of the moon with
white fire fills

And dead leaves crackle under the feet,
When men roll kegs to the cider mills
And chestnuts roast on every street;

When the night sky glows like a hollow shell
Of lustered emerald and pearl,
The kilted cricket knows too well
His doom. His tiny bagpipes skirl.

Quavering under the polished stars
In stubble, thicket, and frosty copse
The cricket blows a few choked bars,
And puts away his pipe—and stops.

TO LOUISE

(A Christmas Baby, Now One Year Old.)

UNDAUNTED by a world of grief
You came upon perplexing days,
And cynics doubt their disbelief
To see the sky-stains in your gaze.

Your sudden and inclusive smile
And your emphatic tears, admit
That you must find this life worth while,
So eagerly you clutch at it!

Your face of triumph says, brave mite,
That life is full of love and luck—
Of blankets to kick off at night,
And two soft rose-pink thumbs to suck.

O loveliest of pioneers
Upon this trail of long surprise,
May all the stages of the years
Show such enchantment in your eyes!

C H I M N E Y S M O K E

By parents' patient buttonings,
And endless safety pins, you'll grow
To ribbons, garters, hooks and things,
Up to the Ultimate Trousseau—

But never, in your dainty prime,
Will you be more adored by me
Than when you see, this Great First Time,
Lit candles on a Christmas Tree!

December, 1919.



*. . . When you see, this Great First Time,
Lit candles on a Christmas Tree!*

CHRISTMAS EVE

OUR hearts to-night are open wide,
The grudge, the grief, are laid aside:
The path and porch are swept of snow,
The doors unlatched; the hearthstones glow—
No visitor can be denied.

All tender human homes must hide
Some wistfulness beneath their pride:
Compassionate and humble grow
Our hearts to-night.

Let empty chair and cup abide!
Who knows? Some well-remembered stride
May come as once so long ago—
Then welcome, be it friend or foe!
There is no anger can divide
Our hearts to-night.

EPITAPH ON THE PROOFREADER OF
THE ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA

MAJESTIC tomes, you are the tomb
Of Aristides Edward Bloom,
Who labored, from the world aloof,
In reading every page of proof.

From A to And, from Aus to Bis
Enthusiasm still was his;
From Cal to Cha, from Cha to Con
His soft-lead pencil still went on.

But reaching volume Fra to Gib,
He knew at length that he was sib
To Satan; and he sold his soul
To reach the section Pay to Pol.

Then Pol to Ree, and Shu to Sub
He staggered on, and sought a pub.
And just completing Vet to Zym,
The motor hearse came round for him.

He perished, obstinately brave:
They laid the Index on his grave.

THE MUSIC BOX

AT SIX—long ere the wintry dawn—
 There sounded through the silent hall
 To where I lay, with blankets drawn
 Above my ears, a plaintive call.

The Urchin, in the eagerness
 Of three years old, could not refrain;
 Awake, he straightway yearned to dress
 And frolic with his clockwork train.

I heard him with a sullen shock.
 His sister, by her usual plan,
 Had piped us aft at 3 o'clock—
 I vowed to quench the little man.

I leaned above him, somewhat stern,
 And spoke, I fear, with emphasis—
 Ah, how much better, parents learn,
 To seal one's censure with a kiss!

Again the house was dark and still,
 Again I lay in slumber's snare,
 When down the hall I heard a trill,
 A tiny, tinkling, tuneful air—

His music-box! His best-loved toy,
 His crib companion every night;
 And now he turned to it for joy
 While waiting for the lagging light.

How clear, and how absurdly sad
 Those tingling pricks of sound unrolled;
 They chirped and quavered, as the lad
 His lonely little heart consoled.

Columbia, the Ocean's Gem—
 (Its only tune) shrilled sweet and faint.
 He cranked the chimes, admiring them
 In vigil gay, without complaint.

The treble music piped and stirred,
 The leaping air that was his bliss;
 And, as I most contritely heard,
 I thanked the all-unconscious Swiss!

The needled jets of melody
 Rang slower and died away—
 The Urchin slept; and it was I
 Who lay and waited for the day.



The Music Box

TO LUATH

(Robert Burns's Dog)

"Darling Jean" was Jean Armour, a "comely country lass," whom Burns met at a penny wedding at Mauchline. They chanced to be dancing in the same quadrille when the poet's dog sprang to his master and almost upset some of the dancers. Burns remarked that he wished he could get any of the lasses to like him as well as his dog did.

Some days afterward, Jean, seeing him pass as she was bleaching clothes on the village green, called to him and asked him if he had yet got any of the lasses to like him as well as his dog did.

That was the beginning of an acquaintance that coloured all of Burns's life.—NATHAN HASKELL DOLE.

WELL, Luath, man, when you came
prancing

All glee to see your Robin dancing,
His partner's muslin gown mischancing
You leaped for joy!
And little guessed what sweet romancing
You caused, my boy!

With happy bark, that moment jolly,
 You frisked and frolicked, faithful collie;
 His other dog, old melancholy,
 Was put to flight—
 But what a tale of grief and folly
 You wagged that night!

Ah, Luath, tyke, your bonny master
 Whose lyric pulse beat ever faster
 Each time he saw a lass and passed her
 His breast went bang!
 In many a woful heart's disaster
 He felt the pang!

Poor Robin's heart, forever burning,
 Forever roving, ranting, yearning,
 From you that heart might have been
 learning
 To be less fickle!
 Might have been spared so many a turning
 And grievous prickles!

Your collie heart held but one notion—
When Robbie jigged in sprightly motion
You ran to show your own devotion
 And gambolled too,
And so that tempest on love's ocean
 Was due to you!

Well, it is ower late for preaching
And hearts are aye too hot for teaching!
When Robin with his eye beseeching
 By greenside came,
Jeanie—poor lass—forgot her bleaching
 And yours the blame!

THOUGHTS ON REACHING LAND

I HAD a friend whose path was pain—
 Oppressed by all the cares of earth
 Life gave him little chance to drain
 His secret cisterns of rich mirth.

His work was hasty, harassed, vexed:
 His dreams were laid aside, perforce,
 Until—in this world, or the next. . . .
 (His trade? Newspaper man, of course!)

What funded wealth of tenderness,
 What ingots of the heart and mind
 He must uneasily repress
 Beneath the rasping daily grind.

But now and then, and with my aid,
 For fear his soul be wholly lost,
 His devoir to the grape he paid
 To call soul back, at any cost!

Then, liberate from discipline,
 Undrugged by caution and control,
 Through all his veins came flooding in
 The virtued passion of his soul!

His spirit bared, and felt no shame:
 With holy light his eyes would shine—
 See Truth her acolyte reclaim
 After the second glass of wine!

The self that life had trodden hard
 Aspired, was generous and free:
 The glowing heart that care had charred
 Grew flame, as it was meant to be.

A pox upon the canting lot
 Who call the glass the Devil's shape—
 A greater pox where'er some sot
 Defiles the honor of the grape.

Then look with reverence on wine
 That kindles human brains uncouth—
 There must be something part divine
 In aught that brings us nearer Truth!

So—continently skull your fumes
 (Here let our little sermon end)
 And bless this X-ray that illumines
 The secret bosom of your friend!

A SYMPOSIUM

THERE was a Russian novelist
 Whose name was Solugubrious,
 The reading circles took him up,
 (They'd heard he was salubrious.)

The women's club of Cripple Creek
 Soon held a kind of seminar
 To learn just what his message was—
 You know what bookworms women are.

The tea went round. After five cups
 (You should have seen them bury tea)
 Dear Mrs. Brown said what she liked
 Was the great man's *sincerity*.

Sweet Mrs. Jones (how free she was
 From all besetting vanity)
 Declared that she loved even more
 His broad and deep *humanity*.

Good Mrs. Smith, though she disclaimed
 All thought of being critical,
 Protested that she found his work
 A wee bit *analytical*.



Solugubrious

But Mrs. Black, the President,
Of wisdom found the pinnacle:
She said, "Dear me, I always think
Those Russians are so *cynical*."

Well, poor old Solugubrious,
It's true that they had heard of him;
But neither Brown, Jones, Smith, nor Black
Had ever read a word of him!

TO A TELEPHONE OPERATOR WHO
HAS A BAD COLD

HOW hoarse and husky in my ear
Your usually cheerful chirrup:
You have an awful cold, my dear—
Try aspirin or bronchial syrup.

When I put in a call to-day
Compassion stirred my humane blood red
To hear you faintly, sadly, say
The number: *Burray Hill dide hudred!*

I felt (I say) quick sympathy
To hear you croak in the receiver—
Will you be sorry too for me
A month hence, when I have hay fever?

NURSERY RHYMES FOR THE
TENDER-HEARTED

(Dedicated to Don Marquis.)

I

SCUTTLE, scuttle, little roach—
How you run when I approach:
Up above the pantry shelf.
Hastening to secrete yourself.

Most adventurous of vermin,
How I wish I could determine
How you spend your hours of ease,
Perhaps reclining on the cheese.

Cook has gone, and all is dark—
Then the kitchen is your park:
In the garbage heap that she leaves
Do you browse among the tea leaves?

How delightful to suspect
All the places you have trekked:
Does your long antenna whisk its
Gentle tip across the biscuits?

Do you linger, little soul,
Drowsing in our sugar bowl?
Or, abandonment most utter,
Shake a shimmy on the butter?

Do you chant your simple tunes
Swimming in the baby's prunes?
Then, when dawn comes, do you slink
Homeward to the kitchen sink?

Timid roach, why be so shy?
We are brothers, thou and I.
In the midnight, like yourself,
I explore the pantry shelf!



*In the midnight, like yourself,
I explore the pantry shelf!*

NURSERY RHYMES FOR THE
TENDER-HEARTED

II

ROCKABYE, insect, lie low in thy den,
Father's a cockroach, mother's a hen.
And Betty, the maid, doesn't clean up the sink,
So you shall have plenty to eat and to drink.

Hushabye, insect, behind the mince pies:
If the cook sees you her anger will rise;
She'll scatter poison, as bitter as gall,
Death to poor cockroach, hen, baby and all.

NURSERY RHYMES FOR THE
TENDER-HEARTED

III

THERE was a gay henroach, and what do
you think,

She lived in a cranny behind the old sink—
Eggshells and grease were the chief of her diet;
She went for a stroll when the kitchen was quiet.

She walked in the pantry and sampled the bread,
But when she came back her old husband was
dead:

Long had he lived, for his legs they were fast,
But the kitchen maid caught him and squashed
him at last.

NURSERY RHYMES FOR THE
TENDER-HEARTED

IV

I KNEW a black beetle, who lived down a
drain,

And friendly he was though his manners were
plain;

When I took a bath he would come up the pipe,
And together we'd wash and together we'd wipe.

Though mother would sometimes protest with a
sneer

That my choice of a tub-mate was wanton and
queer,

A nicer companion I never have seen:

He bathed every night, so he must have been
clean.

Whenever he heard the tap splash in the tub
He'd dash up the drain-pipe and wait for a scrub,
And often, so fond of ablution was he,
I'd find him there floating and waiting for me.

C H I M N E Y S M O K E

But nurse has done something that seems a great
shame:

She saw him there, waiting, prepared for a game:

She turned on the hot and she scalded him sore

And he'll never come bathing with me any more.

THE TWINS

CON was a thorn to brother Pro—
On Pro we often sicked him:
Whatever Pro would claim to know
Old Con would contradict him!



A PRINTER'S MADRIGAL

(Extremely technical)

I 'D like to have you meet my wife!
 I simply cannot keep from hinting
 I've never seen, in all my life,
 So fine a specimen of printing.

Her type is not some **bold-face** font,
 Set solid. Nay! And I will say out
 That no typographer could want
 To see a better balanced layout.

A nice proportion of white space
 There is for brown eyes to look large in,
 And not a feature in her face
 Comes anywhere too near the margin.

Locked up with all her sweet display
 Her form will never pi. She's like a
 Corrected proof marked *stet*, O. K.—
 And yet she loves me, fatface **Pica!**
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CHIMNEYSMOKE

She has a fine one-column head,
And like a comma curves each eyebrow—
Her forehead has an extra lead
Which makes her seem a trifle highbrow.

Her nose, *italicized brevier*,
Too lovely to describe by penpoint;
Her mouth is set in pearl: her ear
And chin are comely Caslon ten-point.

Her cheeks (a pink parenthesis)
Make my pulse beat 14-em measure,
And such typography as this
Would make **De Vinne** scream with pleasure.

And so, of all typefounder chaps
Her father's best, in my opinion;
She is my NONPAREIL (IN CAPS)
And I (in lower case) her minion.

I hope you will not stand aloof
Because my metaphors are shoppy;
Of her devotion I've a proof—
I tell the urchin, *Follow Copy!*

THE POET ON THE HEARTH

WHEN fire is kindled on the dogs,
But still the stubborn oak delays,
Small embers laid above the logs
Will draw them into sudden blaze.

Just so the minor poet's part:
(A greater he need not desire)
The charcoals of his burning heart
May light some Master into fire!

O PRAISE ME NOT THE COUNTRY

O PRAISE me not the country—
The meadows green and cool,
The solemn glow of sunsets, the hidden silver
pool!
The city for my craving,
Her lordship and her slaving,
The hot stones of her paving
For me, a city fool!

O praise me not the leisure
Of gardened country seats,
The fountains on the terrace against the summer
heats—
The city for my yearning,
My spending and my earning.
Her winding ways for learning,
Sing hey! the city streets!

O praise me not the country,
 Her sycamores and bees,
 I had my youthful plenty of sour apple trees!
 The city for my wooing,
 My dreaming and my doing;
 Her beauty for pursuing,
 Her deathless mysteries.

O praise me not the country,
 Her evenings full of stars,
 Her yachts upon the water with the wind among
 their spars—
 The city for my wonder,
 Her glory and her blunder,
 And O the haunting thunder
 Of the Elevated cars!



A STONE IN ST. PAUL'S GRAVEYARD

(New York)

*Here Lyes the Body of
Iohn Jones the Son of
Iohn Jones Who Departed
This Life December the 13
1768 Aged 4 Years & 4 Months
& 2 Days*

HERE, where enormous shadows creep,
He casts his childish shadow too:
How small he seems, beneath the steep
Great walls; his tender days, so few,
Lovingly numbered, every one—
John Jones, John Jones's little son.

O sunlight on the Lightning's wings!
Yet though our buildings skyward climb
Our heartbreaks are but little things
In the equality of Time.
The sum of life, for all men's stones:
He was John Jones, son of John Jones.

THE MADONNA OF THE CURB

ON the curb of a city pavement,
By the ash and garbage cans,
In the stench and rolling thunder
Of motor trucks and vans,
There sits my little lady,
With brave but troubled eyes,
And in her arms a baby
That cries and cries and cries.

She cannot be more than seven;
But years go fast in the slums,
And hard on the pains of winter
The pitiless summer comes.
The wail of sickly children
She knows; she understands
The pangs of puny bodies,
The clutch of small hot hands.

In the deadly blaze of August,
That turns men faint and mad,
She quiets the peevish urchins
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*The wail of sickly children
She knows; she understands
The pangs of puny bodies,
The clutch of small hot hands.*

By telling a dream she had—
 A heaven with marble counters,
 And ice, and a singing fan;
 And a God in white, so friendly,
 Just like the drug-store man.

Her ragged dress is dearer
 Than the perfect robe of a queen!
 Poor little lass, who knows not
 The blessing of being clean.
 And when you are giving millions
 To Belgian, Pole and Serb,
 Remember my pitiful lady—
 Madonna of the Curb!

THE ISLAND

A SONG for England?
Nay, what is a song for England?

Our hearts go by green-cliffed Kinsale
 Among the gulls' white wings,
 Or where, on Kentish forelands pale
 The lighthouse beacon swings:
 Our hearts go up the Mersey's tide,
 Come in on Suffolk foam—
 The blood that will not be denied
 Moves fast, and calls us home!

Our hearts now walk a secret round
 On many a Cotswold hill,
 For we are mixed of island ground,
 The island draws us still:
 Our hearts may pace a windy turn
 Where Sussex downs are high,
 Or watch the lights of London burn,
 A bonfire in the sky!

What is the virtue of that soil
 That flings her strength so wide?
 Her ancient courage, patient toil,
 Her stubborn wordless pride?
 A little land, yet loved therein
 As any land may be,
 Rejoicing in her discipline,
 The salt stress of the sea.

Our hearts shall walk a Sherwood track,
 Our lips taste English rain,
 We thrill to see the Union Jack
 Across some deep-sea lane;
 Though all the world be of rich cost
 And marvellous with worth,
 Yet if that island ground were lost .
 How empty were the earth!

A song for England?
Lo, every word we speak's a song for
England.

SUNDAY NIGHT

TWO grave brown eyes, severely bent
 Upon a memorandum book—
 A sparkling face, on which are blent
 A hopeful and a pensive look;
 A pencil, purse, and book of checks
 With stubs for varying amounts—
 Elaine, the shrewdest of her sex,
 Is busy balancing accounts.

Sedately, in the big armchair,
 She, all engrossed, the audit scans—
 Her pencil hovers here and there
 The while she calculates and plans;
 What's this? A faintly pensive frown
 Upon her forehead gathers now—
 Ah, does the butcher—heartless clown—
 Beget that shadow on her brow?
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*Ah, does the butcher—heartless clown—
Beget that shadow on her brow?*

A murrain on the tradesman churl
Who caused this fair accountant's gloom!
Just then—a baby's cry—my girl
Arose and swiftly left the room.
Then in her purse by stratagem
I thrust some bills of small amounts—
She'll think she had forgotten them,
And smile again at her accounts!

ENGLAND, JULY 1913

To Rupert Brooke

O ENGLAND, England . . . that July
How placidly the days went by!

Two years ago (how long it seems)
In that dear England of my dreams
I loved and smoked and laughed amain
And rode to Cambridge in the rain.
A careless godlike life was there!
To spin the roads with *Shotover*,
To dream while punting on the Cam,
To lie, and never give a damn
For anything but comradeship
And books to read and ale to sip,
And shandygaff at every inn
When *The Gorilla* rode to Lynn!
O world of wheel and pipe and oar
In those old days before the War.

O poignant echoes of that time!
I hear the Oxford towers chime,
The throbbing of those mellow bells
And all the sweet old English smells—

The Deben water, quick with salt,
 The Woodbridge brew-house and the malt;
 The Suffolk villages, serene
 With lads at cricket on the green,
 And Wytham strawberries, so ripe,
 And *Murray's Mixture* in my pipe!

In those dear days, in those dear days,
 All pleasant lay the country ways;
 The echoes of our stalwart mirth
 Went echoing wide around the earth
 And in an endless bliss of sun
 We lay and watched the river run.
 And you by Cam and I by Isis
 Were happy with our own devices.

Ah, can we ever know again
 Such friends as were those chosen men,
 Such men to drink, to bike, to smoke with,
 To worship with, or lie and joke with?
 Never again, my lads, we'll see
 The life we led at twenty-three.
 Never again, perhaps, shall I
 Go flashing bravely down the High
 To see, in that transcendent hour,
 The sunset glow on Magdalen Tower.

Dear Rupert Brooke, your words recall
 Those endless afternoons, and all
 Your Cambridge—which I loved as one
 Who was her grandson, not her son.
 O ripples where the river slacks
 In greening eddies round the “backs”;
 Where men have dreamed such gallant things
 Under the old stone bridge at *King’s*.
 Or leaned to feed the silver swans
 By the tennis meads at *John’s*.
 O Granta’s water, cold and fresh,
 Kissing the warm and eager flesh
 Under the willow’s breathing stir—
 The bathing pool at *Grantchester*. . . .
 What words can tell, what words can praise
 The burly savor of those days!

Dear singing lad, those days are dead
 And gone for aye your golden head;
 And many other well-loved men
 Will never dine in Hall again.
 I too have lived remembered hours
 In Cambridge; heard the summer showers
 Make music on old *Heffer’s* pane
 While I was reading Pepys or Taine.
 Through *Trumpington* and *Grantchester*
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I used to roll on *Shotover*;
At *Hauxton Bridge* my lamp would light
And sleep in *Royston* for the night.
Or to *Five Miles from Anywhere*
I used to scull; and sit and swear
While wasps attacked my bread and jam
Those summer evenings on the Cam.
(O crispy English cottage-loaves
Baked in ovens, not in stoves!
O white unsalted English butter
O satisfaction none can utter!) . . .

To think that while those joys I knew
In Cambridge, I did not know you.

July, 1915.

CASUALTY

A WELL-SHARP'D pencil leads one on to
write:

When guns are cocked, the shot is guaranteed;
The primed occasion puts the deed in sight:
Who steals a book who knows not how to read?

Seeing a pulpit, who can silence keep?
A maid, who would not dream her ta'en to wife?
Men looking down from some sheer dizzy steep
Have (quite impromptu) leapt, and ended life.

A GRUB STREET RECESSIONAL

O NOBLE gracious English tongue
 Whose fibers we so sadly twist,
 For caitiff measures he has sung
 Have pardon on the journalist.

For mumbled meter, leaden pun,
 For slipshod rhyme, and lazy word,
 Have pity on this graceless one—
 Thy mercy on Thy servant, Lord!

The metaphors and tropes depart,
 Our little clippings fade and bleach:
 There is no virtue and no art
 Save in straightforward Saxon speech.

Yet not in ignorance or spite,
 Nor with Thy noble past forgot
 We sinned: indeed we had to write
 To keep a fire beneath the pot.

CHIMNEYSMOKE

Then grant that in the coming time,
With inky hand and polished sleeve,
In lucid prose or honest rhyme
Some worthy task we may achieve—

Some pinnacled and marbled phrase,
Some lyric, breaking like the sea,
That we may learn, not hoping praise,
The gift of Thy simplicity.

PRELIMINARY INSTRUCTIONS FOR A
FUNERAL SERVICE: BEING A
POEM IN FOUR STANZAS

SAY this poor fool misfeatured all his days,
And could not mend his ways;
And say he trod
Most heavily upon the corns of God.

But also say that in his clabbered brain
There was the essential pain—
The idiot's vow
To tell his troubled Truth, no matter how.

Unhappy fool, you say, with pitiful air:
Who was he, then, and where?
Ah, you divine
He lives in your heart, as he lives in mine.



HASTA LA VISTA

HASTA LA VISTA

I have to laugh when I think how different this little narrative is from the usual books about South America; and how scornful professional travel-writers would be if they ever heard of such humble trespass in their field.

We had so happy a time on this voyage to Peru that two years later (in 1936) we went again, and this time as far as Chile. I am sometimes accused (usually by Mr. Harry Hansen in the N. Y. *World-Telegram*) of writing about everything that happens to me. How untrue that is! I have a whole notebook full of exciting observations made during a round trip voyage in *Santa Rita* from New York to Valparaiso and back; including an airplane flight along the Andes and over the great Peruvian Desert, from Lima to Guayaquil. Of that I have written nothing thereby showing myself a very unenterprising journalist. It was a superb experience, one that I cherish all by myself. And as I grow older I realize with regret how much of the most beautiful, moving and significant observations in living are never mentioned by anyone. Usually, just when the right people are present and the perfect communicative moment approaches, someone has to keep an appointment somewhere and the equilibrium is gone.

But if you want to know one of my ideas of a Good Time, it would be the second morning out, southward ho, aboard one of the smaller Grace Line ships: preferably *Santa Rita*. You have a swim in the tank before breakfast; then you are topside in forenoon blaze. You're in the Gulf Stream already; the ultramarine silk-wrinkled sea shows yellow clots of sponge; strong salty suds are marbled on the water alongside. Into your mind comes Keats's line, "The Great Elements are no mean comforters." You haven't the faintest desire, or intention, of writing about anything; and maybe, before *almuerzo*, you go down to the smokeroom and have one, just one, Cartavio cocktail or Pisco sour—only known to us Tropical Tramps.

So long, Harry: I'll send you a postcard from Peru.

“*Me Voy Al Sur*”

*M*_{uy Señor mio}:—I promised a report on our discovery of South America. Like most of the great landfalls it was largely accidental. It was California that was mostly in my mind, but a strike developed out there that sounded as though it might be serious. And you pointed out to me that we might take the suggestion of the Canal itself, which brings one out headed southward. Chris Cella, at whose place we were lunching, brought up his copy of the *Literary Digest* atlas. Like the hardy Pizarro (as vouched for by Prescott) I exclaimed *me voy al sur*.

HASTA LA VISTA

You mustn't mind if I begin slowly and with difficulty; my hand still aches from playing deck tennis with the skipper and the chief officer. Perhaps it's good for a writer's hand to stiffen up now and then. He takes more time to think. Pizarro would be interested to know that one can go to Peru nowadays with no more serious hardship than a thumb lamed by deck sports and a considerable bunch of chits from the smokeroom steward. It's only fair to add that the skipper's hand is also a bit sore. It was excellent luck for a lover of historic names to travel in a ship named *Santa Maria* and commanded by Captain Cook. But before you try deck tennis with him and his chief officer, Mr. Rennie, give your hand a month's workout on anvil or sawbuck.

You yourself, *muy caballero*, will condone the naïveté of these truthful notes. Perhaps immaculate ignorance is sometimes an advantage: it receives an impression sharp and clear. I knew

no Spanish and had read none of the classic books in English—neither the famous Prescott, the sagacious Bryce, nor the fantastic *Bridge of San Luis Rey*. I did not dull the sensibility of my skull by any preliminary study. On ship-board I can never read anything but detective stories. I did skim a little Bryce the first evening, and was disturbed by his description of the climate in Lima. I learned later that his stay in that city lasted less than three hours, so his report is not conclusive.* The *Santa Maria* needs a new copy of Bryce, by the way: it has been read almost to pieces by inquiring passengers, and several pages are missing.

You remember the very hot day last June when we first discussed this greenhorn expedition over a platter of Cella's filet of sole and you brought along a bottle of that delicious Undurraga—a Rhine wine from Chile—to initiate

*See H. A. L. Fisher: *James Bryce*, II, 49.

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me into South American culture. You were appalled to realize that I did not even know which side of the continent your steamers travelled, nor how to pronounce *llama* (yama) and *Bolivar* (Boleevar). (Kipling didn't either, in his ballad.) But in our case there was a certain excuse for the familiar mispronunciation. The last two winters, living in an apartment in New York, our telephone number was the same (with a different exchange) as a hotel of that name on Central Park West. At all hours of day and night we would be rung up by voices asking "Is this the Hotel *Bolivar*?" Perhaps that first subconsciously put it into our heads to follow the trail of the Liberator—who was one of the greatest benefactors ever known to the industry in equestrian statues.

How much, or how little, one may learn or guess in 39 days, you will plainly perceive. But as the doings started by Pizarro have been going

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on for some 146,000 days (Lima celebrates in 1935 its 400th anniversary) you will not justly expect from me more than about 1/3750 of the story. I will not assume to rival Prescott; though it must be recalled that the great historian did not himself see Peru. At least I became aware of the singular egotism of speaking of ourselves as Americans. I hope I shall remember henceforward to say, as they do down there, North-americans.

Somewhere in Lima I lost my favorite fountain pen. I have to fall back on a spare, which has betrayed me before now by writing more biggity than I thought. But it is pleasant to imagine that the old one is now probably effusing fluent Spanish.

It was a hot, sunny and humid day when we sailed (July 21). The meteorological omens were excellent: on the way in to Brooklyn I saw in the

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morning paper "Weather Bureau Man to Wed." The Weather Man would certainly have chosen for his honeymoon the most dulcet season, and it proved so for us. Atlantic and Caribbean were blue and even; not until a week later, when we met the first long Pacific swells, did I hear a single creak in the corridors.

Memories of sailing day are always capricious. Most of all the parents are likely to remember the rich moisture of a telephone booth on the pier where we wrestled forty minutes to get through a long distance call to a girls' camp up-state where one member of the family was spending the summer. We had expected a letter from her before leaving; it had not come, and we wanted to be sure everything was all right. The probable reason for our not having received the letter must be withheld until the very end and climax of the narrative; it will provide (I hope) an artistic suspense. The connection was got,

just before sailing hour. There was scarcely time left for the much needed glass of beer with Throck and Pussy, who had come to see us off.

There is a noticeable Spanish tinge in the waterfront streets down toward Pier 33, Brooklyn. Or so it seemed as we went by taxi from the L. I. R. R. terminal. But perhaps my imagination was oversensitized to visions of Spain. As the ship pulled out into Buttermilk Channel I saw what I took to be a beautiful señorita on the pier, very Hispanic in dress and complexion. I tried hard to lasso her with one of the colored paper streamers, but in her haughty Castilian way she paid no attention. We learned later that she was the daughter of a fellow passenger, pure Scandinavian. And certainly no one could look more engagingly Spanish than little Pussy Throckmorton. The most severe observer sees always something of what he expects. All through

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the Caribbean I remarked with pleasure on the peculiarly tropical aspect of the clouds—vast bosomy rolls and bulges of silver; more substantial with vapor, I said to myself, than our thin temperate stuff. Then, the very day after getting home, I saw some just like that above the railroad station at Roslyn.

Santa Maria stood up handsome at her pier. She is a well-found and buxom creature; perhaps a trifle short for her bulk, but this may be partly the illusion of the cruiser stern. My eye was early trained to the old overhang counter. She was built wide and deep with an eye to cargo, and is at her most comfortable under rather than over 16 knots. She is as big as a sensible man ever wishes a ship to be: 15,000 tons displacement; 486 feet long, 64 feet beam.

I had expected this to be a salute in honor of the U. S. merchant marine; and so it is; but going up to the boat deck to get the ship laid out in

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my mind and admire the fine view of Manhattan across Governor's Island, the first things I saw were Maclachlan davits, from Glasgow. Then Keith ventilating fans, London. It did not take long to recognize our old friend Shanks's burly Scottish plumbing, which I have celebrated before; and at lunch (*almuerzo*, the first Spanish word you learn next after *caballeros* and *señoras*) there was Sheffield cutlery. Surely, I said to myself, this is a British ship. Yes, she was built (1928) on the Tees.

Christopher Junior, an economist by instinct, approved of that. The principle of free trade, he said, is that things should be built where it can be done best and cheapest. As the voyage went on and I began to understand something of the routine of a big ship carrying freight for many different ports I realized that these notes might well turn into an amateur essay on commerce. More than once I found loitering on a tropic-hot

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pier quite as interesting as going to look for palm trees and cathedrals.

W. F. Dalzell was the tug that got us away; this interested me as most of my observations on towage have been of the *Morans* and *Barretts*. By the time he is well into the stream the experienced traveler has already discovered the chart posted up outside the smokeroom, showing the ship's course all the way from New York to Valparaiso, and various other official memoranda—*e.g.*, that foreign matches must not be used in Ecuador and Peru, nor cigarette-lighters without a license; and the welcome news that there is a laundry on board. This, even more important than Inca ruins and views of volcanoes, is something to let the tourist know about beforehand. If he is travelling with small baggage and through tropical heats, it will spare him much anxiety.

At our first *almuerzo* we encountered the new experience of a dining saloon with all-feminine

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staff. The waitresses are certainly as efficient as masculine stewards and far more decorative; as neat and nimble as canaries in their yellow dresses. It seemed to me that they have more humor than the other sex, and in 26 days on the same ship you can get on very friendly terms. In the case of our young Helen (age 13) the final parting with Mary was a matter of embraces and almost tears. The night before landing, at the sentimental Farewell Dinner, spontaneous rhythmical cheering broke out in various sections of the saloon in humorous praise of these damsels. *We want Mary!* was the repeated cry from one corner of the room as our handsome nymph struggled to disengage herself from rolls of paper ribbon enlacing her in homage. *We prefer Betty!* came the shout from a neighboring quarter. On the other side of the ship they were crying in competition, *We wish Margaret!* But the cheer for Mary was surely the loudest and best unison.

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I remember one night, as we were coming down the broad Guayas River from Guayaquil, I was strolling on a lower deck and found three of the waitresses by the rail in off-duty converse with three young petty officers. I paused for a chat, and happened to remark on the soft jungle perfume that comes off those richly forested shores. "It certainly smells sweet tonight," I said. "Maybe it's us girls," said one of them.

The first drink on shipboard is always something of a rite. Not knowing what might be the favorite tippie on the South American run (we had not yet learned the pisco sour) Titania and I began, the first afternoon, with a Tom Collins which seemed appropriate to hot weather. Then I learned from the purser that ginger beer was available, so for the most part I adhered to my old elixir, gin and ginger. I intend to mention as many actual trade names as possible, so let me say that the ginger beer came from Jewsbury

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& Brown of Manchester—but not, alas, in stone bottles. I was pleased by their ingenious emblem on the bottle: the familiar Star of David made of two equilateral triangles; one of which was tinted brown, thus symbolizing the names of both manufacturers. The first cocktail hour in the smokeroom we tried a Bacardi, since we were on our way to the regions of sugar cane. (One of our first landfalls was Rum Cay, in the Bahamas.) Blythe, aged 11, happened along and was given a little ginger ale in a cocktail glass. Her mother, entering just then, was startled to see the young person raise the glass and swig it with the toast *My betrayer!*

Almost at once, moving toward the Gulf Stream of blue water and yellow clots of sponge, one falls into the comfortable lethargy of ship-board. Sleep, swimming in the big canvas-lined tank, deck tennis, Planters' Punch, these—and

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plentiful meals—are a life complete. But even in our idleness we could discern that this was quite different from a North Atlantic voyage. Tourists for curiosity were few; most of the passengers had some strong intention in being there. There was a sort of O. Henry feeling in their colorful variety. There were mining executives going back to posts in Peru and Chile, a general of the Colombian army, a Bolivian statesman living in exile, accountants to check on figures at the Talara oil field, young engineers bound for three-year contracts in the Andes and reading textbooks on dams and pumping. Colombia was transferring a diplomat from Washington to Lima; a sportsman was on his way to Galapagos to fish; a Wall Street man going to study tramways and breweries and haciendas in Ecuador; Canal Zone pilots returning from vacation. The owner of a Yugoslav newspaper was going down to the ranch in Colombia which pays his news-

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paper's deficits. After going as far as possible by train he would still have three days on horseback. The wife of an airways traffic manager would meet her husband in Cristobal and fly from there to Lima. She told me that she had read the whole of *Anthony Adverse* while riding with her husband on inspection flights round South America. All these people, bound on their urgent occasions, are more interesting than the usual shipload of vacationers.

II

Spanish Main

HALIFAX to Hispaniola” was the heading on one of the charts lying on the chartroom desk. *Hispaniola*—name to recall “schooners, islands, and maroons, and Buccaneers and buried Gold.” Sometimes, leaning in a drowse over the stem, drugged by intense Caribbean blue, watching streaks of sponge and the gauzy skitter of flying fish, you may wonder how men ever roused up enough energy to go pirating in such sleepy air. I had made resolution to grind Spanish, and indeed I did acquire some nouns; but to pursue a verb through its intricacies was too strong a task.

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I discovered later that for purposes of conversation a lot of nouns and no verbs is poor equipment. But even in a sea lethargy one can study the chart with profit.

I missed, going south, the island of San Salvador, which the chart asserts as "the landfall of Columbus, 1492"; we passed it in the dark of early morning; but saw it clear and plain coming north. The low profile of woods and beach offers nothing remarkable to the casual eye. As on many of these Bahama islands and cays, the chart prints the ominous word *wreck* along the shore. "San Salvador, or Watling Island" is the legend; who was Watling? My own first glimpse of land was a little farther south; Bird Rock, Crooked Island, and then the channel thrillingly named Mira Por Vos. That, I suppose, means *Look out for yourself*, and was warningly christened by some old Spanish navigator who discovered the current setting westward onto a

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dangerous shoal. "The Great Equatorial current" (says the chart) "is generally felt throughout the West Indies, moving to the N.W. or West . . . a reactionary current to the N.E. sometimes occurs, but the uncertainty of these phenomena demands a more than ordinary attention of the navigator."—Similar variations of behavior are often observable on the map of literature.

The chart in front of me at the moment is certainly the finest kind of literature. It is one of *Santa Maria's* old ones, discarded for a later edition, and begged by me from the chief officer. It shows in careful red rulings and compass rings and pricks the record of many runs north and south from the Windward Passage to the loom of San Salvador light. Memoranda of distances (*e.g.* that from Mira Por Vos to Ambrose is just 1100 miles), and magnetic variations are jotted down. The passenger who sees a modern liner

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creaming along with no one at the wheel—sometimes not even anyone in the wheelhouse—may well rub his pate at the miracle of automatic steering. But there is always someone with a chart and a pair of dividers not far away. While you and I were drinking gin and ginger or playing roulette he was keeping an eye on the Equatorial Current and *Mira Por Vos*.

“Principally from the Surveys of Commander Richard Owen and the Officers of H.M.S. *Blossom*, 1829–1832,” says the notice on the chart. It must have been an interesting expedition. And when you find that just off the coast of Hispaniola (which we now call Haiti and Santo Domingo) is Silver Bank (“coral rocks awash”) you can’t help thinking that Stevenson took from this very map the name of his immortal sea-cook. The plotting of Treasure Island in the book is in the very style of Commander Owen’s chart, with its memoranda of “foul ground” and

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“strong tide here.” Perhaps Haulover Point (on Grand Caicos) suggested “Haulbowline Head” and Dead Man Cay the Dead Man’s Chest. Or the island of Little Inagua, so oddly rectangular, is very like the shape of a seaman’s box. It would not be hard to see in Crooked Island itself something of the topography of Stevenson’s invention—and it has an outlying companion, which you pass quite near in the ship, called Fortune Island. If I were the man who writes the steamship folders I should be very much tempted to call it the original of Treasure Island and let it go at that. He could put that in at the same time that he corrects the line about “the sparkling Caribbean where Bluebeard and Captain Kidd. . . .” Not Bluebeard, but Blackbeard.

The Treasure Island idea must have been in the children’s minds, too. I was attempting in deplorable Spanish to say today I did something or other. I said *Yo hoy hay* and stuck there.

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Blythe promptly finished the sentence—"And a bottle of rum."

An amusing old volume, *The Pirate's Own Book* (published in Portland, 1837), says:—

The pirate is truly fond of women and wine, and when not engaged in robbing, keeps maddened with intoxicating liquors, and passes his time in debauchery, singing old songs with chorusses like

Drain, drain the bowl, each fearless soul,

Let the world wag as it will.

His hours of relaxation are passed in wild and extravagant frolics amongst the lofty forests of palms and spicy groves and amidst the aromatic and beautiful flowering vegetable productions of that region. He has fruits delicious to the taste, and as companions, the unsophisticated daughters of Africa and the Indies. It would be supposed that his wild career would be one of delight.

But conscience and remorse (the account goes on to say) cause him secret anguish which counteravails his robust pleasures. This Gilbert & Sulli-

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van picture might almost be thought humorously intended if we did not know that piracy was a serious matter to New England shipowners. Even today there still lingers, among those of Rhode Island lineage, a casual saying, "Since Gibbs was hung." I suspect this dates from the execution of Providence's famous buccaneer in 1831.

A study of the chart suggests that it was rather the hazards of navigation which kept the pirate in ill humor. See the periculuous notations for the sailing master: "Low and swampy," "Low dry rocks," "white cliffs," "foul ground," "Holes of very deep water," "caution—strong in-draught," "full of sunken rocks," "strong ripples," "dangerous rocky heads." Even on the latest surveys, how many longshore soundings are marked "unreliable," or with the eloquent Spanish *cuidado*. Toward the mouth of Mouchoir Passage, among bottoms of "crl. s. sh." (not a

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suggestion of cruelty and dismay but hydrographer's abbreviation for coral, sand, shells) observe Fawn Shoal, "unsuccessfully searched for in 1880 by H.M.S. *Fantome*." Probably it was the same as a new bank reported near there in 1916. The most terse comment of all, speaking the voice of suppressed indignation, is along the western reef of Caicos—"always breaking." The very sound, surely, that Jim Hawkins heard in his dreams.

Of course it is not a function of the chart to list scenic charms. But the names are a plain history of what old sailors saw. Hawk's Nest Anchorage, Parrot Cay, Flamingo Hill, Turtle Cove, Ambergris Cay, these are pictures all. Occasionally there enters a literary touch which surprises one. Endymion Rock, for instance. Can Commander Owen have had a copy of Keats aboard the *Blossom*?

To pretend to identify Treasure Island, or

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any of its stage settings, is about as sensible as to pick out a rabbit hole somewhere near Oxford and say it was the one Alice went into. Stevenson himself said of the island, "The scenery is Californian in part, and in part *chic*." But attempt to find the connecting tissue (there always is some) between fancy and reality is one of the happiest and most innocent pleasures. In the case of *Treasure Island* the only germ of geographical fact is the mention of the "Dead Man's Chest" in the buccaneers' song. This barren islet Stevenson found mentioned in a book of Charles Kingsley's, *At Last*, describing a tour in the West Indies. It is said to be a large coffin-shaped rock near Tortola in the British Virgins group. Mr. Vincent Starrett, in a well-documented *enquête d'amour* in *The Colophon* (June 1934) discussed the matter in delightful detail. With the natural preference of every critic for his own hunches he nominates as the authentic Dead Man's Chest

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an island just south of Ponce, Puerto Rico, known as *el Caja de Muertos*, the Box of the Dead. This is visible on any large-scale map today as Muertos Island. Mr. Starrett quotes at length from J. A. Waller's *A Voyage in the West Indies* (1820) describing the unpleasant casket profile of the island and giving an account of its topography—which with surf, mountain, birds, thickets, and goats sounds very like Jim Hawkins's story. All this of course has the delight of pure irrelevance. The goats I really would like to identify are the two unlucky readers—Rev. Purcell and Mr. Will J. Shannon—who wrote to *Young Folks* in 1881 to say they didn't think much of the story. It would be fun to look up the files of the paper and find out what it was they objected to.*

*See *The Letters of Robert Louis Stevenson*, edited by Sidney Colvin, II, 56-57.

III

Afterthoughts

IT IS difficult, just now, to say anything about ships which will not seem motivated by the tragedy of the *Morro Castle*. I was writing, when the news of that horror came upon us, a piece about the innocent pleasures of being a passenger and about the “physical integrity” of ships themselves. I discarded it, for it would have sounded too painful in print. I was thinking of course not of the so-called luxury vessels but of the honest middle-class creatures in which I have mostly travelled. None of the thoughts now in my mind has any specific bearing on the recent

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disaster, of which I know nothing beyond the news stories. Yet, in the bitterness of that affair, one might almost wish that her ghastly hull may long rest on the sands of Asbury Park, a pitiless reminder that the ancient enemies—Storm, Ice, Fire, Man Trouble—are still in full potential. She might not even hide her disgrace in the soon-forgiving sea. She lies there abeam the beach, complete in every circumstance of shame, a national monument against the idea that size and furnishing solve all the problems. It is brutally ironic that she should come, in her agony, to a place where the sea is thought of as a playground.

Much of the business of ocean travel in the past fifteen years has been built upon that false psychology. The lesson of the *Titanic* was forgotten in the War. Economic pressure created the cheap vacation cruises, and crowds of people who know little of ships and their problems are

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persuaded aboard in the idea that they are in a floating hotel. The tradition grew of passengers sailing in a frolic of flowers, cocktails, candies, and the latest fiction. It was the shipmaster himself who needed those anesthetics most, when he found that the owners, or the tourist bureau who had hired the vessel, expected her to be an ocean-going vaudeville. It was even considered bad manners if the company said very much about safety or carried out precautionary drills in any obtrusive way.

This was all very human and natural. But a ship is not just a navigating casino and never can be. Those who have been brought up from childhood with an interest in seafare have watched with amazement and alarm the growth of the luxury fetish. Every time a brilliant new safety device was installed it was almost nullified by an excess of new ornaments and gimcracks. Each time a new ship was planned a little bigger

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or more fanciful than the preceding it was considered a national triumph—instead of a national folly. The city of New York even makes a hurrah of building new piers for vessels too huge to be surely handled and too populous for any single human responsibility. Future prosperity at sea lies in ships of medium size and (whether fast or slow) a decent simplicity of fittings. But you would never guess this from the advertising. I suggested the other day to a magazine publisher that he print an article on *Taking to the Boats*, discussing new ideas of lifeboat build and arrangement that seamen have often mooted. He raised his hands in a gesture of defeat. “What do you suppose would happen to our Cruise Advertising?”

One of the most amazing features of any ocean voyage is the complete lack of interest shown by almost all passengers in the details of routine and management on which their lives depend.

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Rarely will they take the trouble to learn the way to the lifeboat to which they have been assigned. If you ask a group of ladies having cocktails in the smokeroom before dinner which direction the ship is moving you will find several who hardly know forward from aft. Fellow-passengers in the *Santa Maria* a few weeks ago thought I was very droll because at the emergency drill I turned up at my appointed boat with lifebelt on—as I had been taught to do in Cunard and Anchor Line ships. It was even more comic, they supposed, when I gave one of the children the lifebelt and told her to go swimming in the pool with it on, to see how it felt. Another instance that struck me at the time: we were going down the Guayas River (from Guayaquil) in a very black night with blinding showers of rain. The channel there is ticklish and only a few yards out of the way might land one in the mud. I was standing up forward on the prome-

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nade deck looking out through an open window, getting very wet but extremely interested to see what was going on. The chief officer and the carpenter, standing by on the foc'sle head, were getting much wetter than I. I heard the sudden ring and clatter of engine-room signals in the deck casing overhead, we slowed, then the Captain's voice shouted an order from the bridge. The anchor went down with a roar. We remained at anchor for perhaps half an hour until the rain thinned and we could see our course. The whistle blew at intervals as a warning for any other possible craft. Now during all this time there were people in the writing room, just aft of where I was standing; there were youngsters dancing in a sheltered portion of deck amidships; there were others sitting in the smokeroom and in the verandah café; and not one single person came forward to look out, to wonder why we were stopped or to guess what was happening.

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I know that the inquisitive busybody, always asking fool questions, can be a great nuisance; and such implicit assurance is a compliment to a ship's reputation. But it seems to me that the more intelligent passenger is somewhere between the two. Certainly I do not suggest that people go aboard ship with foreboding mien and abandon the various forms of sport and comedy that make a voyage enchanting. But I would at least have them realize something of the unalterable chances, and agree that the success of a voyage does not depend on mural paintings, panelled lounges, and satin drapes. Also that a ship loses virtue beyond a certain bulk. I remember the agitation of an old-time passenger, who had crossed the Atlantic fifty or more times, when by some shift of schedule he was transferred from a small cabin-class ship to one of the giant liners. He was given a de luxe stateroom at no extra cost, and was completely unhappy all the

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way across. She did not feel nor look like a ship to his experienced senses. This is not mere wont or personal crotchet. If the impossible but occasional emergency happens, the population of so huge a vessel is too large to control.

Seamen in active service will not talk in public about these things, and there are endless difficult and technical phases that knot up the problem. Merchant marine officers are underpaid for the anxiety and responsibility of their work, and in some companies crew personnel changes too frequently to make possible the discipline that can meet sudden crises. I am not thinking of the past but of the future. If I can say just one amateur word for the small ship, as against the big one, my conscience is satisfied. Often enough I have admired and marvelled at the miracles of the huge express liners, but I shall be happy to see the day when they will be thought as out of date as the Empire State Building, unprofitable

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and heart-breaking curiosities. I shall be as inquisitive as anyone to have a look at the new *Normandie* and the *Queen Mary*—but don't ask me to travel in them.

I must come back, though it is a difficult theme in our present mood, to those days of sunshine in the *Santa Maria*. I don't *think* aboard ship; but I am now trying to think about being aboard ship. I don't even talk very much on shipboard, I find that I pass into a sort of speechless acceptance which is very comfortable. One of the greatest dangers of a passenger ship has always been the excess of conversation. In the ideal vessel there would be a deck marked off for Silence, to which one might, without giving offense, retire for uninterrupted reflection. I use the word reflection on purpose, for though I don't believe a single thought worth record was native in me during 26 days aboard *Santa Maria*, I

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could feel myself polished to receive or even refract any beams of light from outside. The notion I had in mind about the physical honesty of a ship was one such. You could see it everywhere: in the grain and twist of wire ropes, the scrubbed wooden board on which the bath steward set out the tub of fresh water, the flare of her bows rising softly on a slope of sea, the cook's helper peeling potatoes for the steerage. The hour or so just after breakfast is an excellent time for considering such things in a dull but peaceful way. Whether it might be the electrician overhauling the winches, or a deckhand slung in a bosun's chair to paint the mast, or the solid set-up of the improvised swimming pool, everything seemed efficient to its purpose. In the bottom of that pool, by some trick of broken light, were discs of brightness that shifted to and fro. They looked, under water, just like silver coins until you laid a finger on them and

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found them impalpable. One's thoughts were like that. Sometimes I reproached myself for being a poor reporter. There were interesting people, and I might have learned much by listening. But in that warm dazzle I felt no curiosity, no ambition, nothing but divine indolence. If I could make you feel the salty vitality of the Gulf Stream water in the canvas tank that would be enough. This was not a dismal Pompeiian mausoleum down below but something much nicer—a huge wooden box lined with tarpaulin, on open deck beside a hatch. Clear ocean water came hissing in through a hose, new from the sea. Over the edge of the tank, through safety netting, one looked right down upon the blue streaming alongside. It was almost frightening: one felt bodily in mid-ocean. On the hot canvas of the hatch those eager for sunburn lay basking, shining with olive oil, perhaps calling presently for a Planters' Punch.

And that makes me think of good Mr. H.,

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humorous leader in most sports and sociabilities of our southward run. He is a gentleman of Kentucky who has lived long in Peru; he has the true Kentuckian's genius for amenity. Older than most of us, and lately recuperated from illness, he was still easy champion in all activity; whether athletics, cards, or the more subtle movements of a kindly heart. How delightful to see, under the grizzled outline of a mature and valued citizen, the face of an impish small boy. In the pool we used to assert that he must have submarine blood, for he spent most of his time swimming under water and could retrieve more spoons from the bottom than anyone else. The movement of the pool of course compensated that of the ship, so that even if she rolled the swimmers felt themselves suspended at a point of perfect level balance. Masts and sky, hull and sea, the whole visible world, swung gently around ourselves as absolute center; a good ego-

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tistic feeling. And Mr. H. would rise to the surface and blow, and perhaps declare some dividend from his rich surplus of human observation. We were discussing whether to order a julep, and he told a pleasant anecdote of a Yankee who had moved to Louisville to live. His friends up North deplored what happened to him. "They taught him to put weeds in his whiskey, and it just about ruined him."

IV

A Parcell of Boylers

I SPOKE of Silver Bank, the dangerous shoal area north of Santo Domingo, suggesting that Stevenson found there the name of his famous buccaneer. I should add a word to say how it earned that name. It was there that William Phips (or actually his mates Rogers and Covell) discovered the great Hispaniola Treasure in 1687—one of the few plate-hunting expeditions that really came through; and merely by accident. Nor is Stevenson the only literary hero we can associate with this matter; the affair came under the observation of Samuel Pepys in his official

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capacity at the Admiralty, and there is even a confusion in some of the old maps between Phips and Pepys. This pleases me, too, because I have always believed that the diarist pronounced his name *Pips*. (I think he somewhere rhymed it with *ships*.)

If you are curious about Silver Bank (once delightfully known as the Ambrosia Bank) have a look at Cyrus H. Karraker's valuable little book, *The Hispaniola Treasure*, published by the University of Pennsylvania Press. It excellently sharpens a point I often wish to insert: the fact that scholarship is exciting, and that the sober university presses frequently publish the most thrilling books. Mr. Karraker tells us that as a Research Fellow at Pennsylvania he attended the Saturday Morning Seminar of Professor Cheyney. Something said there started him on a study of the prerogative revenues of the British Crown—which, incidentally, gave us the best

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known word in the literary profession, *royalties*. And before he knew it, looking up the legal status of treasure hunting he found himself in a story to allure any romancer.

I must not privateer Mr. Karraker's trove, which he tells in excellent spirits. My purpose here is simply to note how his investigation tallies with the West Indies chart I studied aboard *Santa Maria*. This Captain Phips, a disorderly Down-Easter who eventually became Governor of Massachusetts and was biographed by Cotton Mather, had heard of the Spanish galleon foundered on the Ambrosia reef in latitude 20° 38' N. He raised money from a syndicate in London and set sail with two ships, the *James and Mary* and the *Henry of London*. Phips had almost given up hope and was dallying in Porto Plata to trade with the Spaniards when his associates Rogers and Covell in the *Henry* bumped into the treasure. Sailing around the

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shoals they were alarmed to find themselves “amongst a parcell of boylers”—rocks or coral rings just awash in which the sea churns and foams like boiling water. They anchored hastily —“& by Gods blessing it being very small breese of wind all night in ye morning they gott Cleare of them.” But exploring in small boats, just by chance one of the seamen noticed a “sea feather” (a kind of fan coral) of extraordinary size and beauty. This they thought would please the melancholy skipper, and sent down a diver to break it off. Did he swim, or did he go down with one of the crude “diving tubs” of that day? At any rate, groping in that hyaline translucence (the kind of thing you remember if you’ve gone swimming around the coral boilers of Bermuda), the man saw a strange shadowy outline. There was the bulwark of a ship, and corroded cannon. The coral fan was growing on the very deck of the galleon.

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So then the fun began. What happened, how many “sows, pigs, dowboys and champeens” of silver they found, the gold ingots, the pieces of eight, the joke they played on Captain Phips, you can read in Mr. Karraker’s book or in Cotton Mather. Before they were driven off by storms and sickness they got £200,000 worth of treasure. The king’s royalty was £20,000. And on the chart before me you can see that “parcell of boylers” plainly marked about 20° 38’ North latitude—“coral rocks awash.”

It’s odd, by the way, that Dr. Johnson once used the identical phrase in such a different sense. Of the sale of the Thrale brewery, you remember: “We are not here to sell a parcel of boilers and vats, but the potentiality of growing rich beyond the dreams of avarice.”

I’m going to dive back into the swimming tank, where I left this leisurely narrative. I’m

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thinking of the very hot and glaring afternoon as the *Santa Maria* came down into the Windward Passage—so-called, I suppose, because it opens a vent for the N.E. trades. It was quite late, just upon sunset, and the tank was solitary. Most of the passengers had gone to their rooms to prepare costumes for a masquerade dinner, and the high-spirited Mr. J., whose genial ambition was to meld the whole crowd together for frolic, had invited about forty of us to take cocktails with him before the party. Mr. J. is an accountant by profession, a grim calling and well acquainted with all forms of fiscal grief; in reaction from this he has a superb capacity for merriment in off hours. "Now folks," he would cry if the dancing in the saloon did not seem sufficiently ardent, "step on it. We'll have no fun on this ship unless we make it ourselves." Which was not intended to be taken seriously, for *Santa Maria* has an excellent disposition for

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mirth. But Mr. J. would skirmish briskly from one partner to another, never content unless everyone was having a good time, and served triumphantly as a social alembic. Or perhaps I mean what goes into an alembic—an alembroth. The dictionary describes this as “a double chloride of ammonium and mercury, used by the alchemists as a stimulant.” And that’s pretty accurate; for without Mr. J.’s mercurial and strictly amateur encouragement (very different from the horrid activity of a “cruise director”) we would never have got together as we did. At the cocktail party that evening the bar-steward served his most picturesque philtre, called a green devil. Large are the sacrifices made by social primates, especially on a night of Caribbean warmth; the one who had worked hardest to make the evening a success slept a night of innocent exhaustion in his deck chair. Or perhaps there were a few grains of paraplegia in the green devil.

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But I'm getting out of sequence; it was before all this, and looking out from the swimming pool on deck I suddenly saw Cape Maisi and the hills of Cuba purple against sunset. That was a landfall more worthy of Columbus, I thought, and gazed long at those rugged hills. Strangely mixed associations of beauty and tragedy must surely come to mind when we think of Cuba—especially to one old enough to remember echoes of the "War with Spain." Even a Quaker boyhood was affected by the newspaper and music-hall uproar of 1898. Just beyond that darkening headland were Guantanamo, El Caney, Santiago de Cuba. I remembered for the first time in all those years that there were once tin soldiers made in the likeness of Northamericans, Spaniards, and Cubans. I remembered a horrifying newspaper drawing of the explosion of the *Maine* which at the age of eight I illuminated with colored crayons. Mr. Hearst, more culpably, was doing

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the same on a huge scale. It was not an affair which we can look back to with much pride. I have not read Mr. Millis's book, *The Martial Spirit*, which I believe deals with that war in a spirit of creditable bitterness and disgust; but it is one of the books that hearsay tells me is worth reading. So also Mr. Hudson Strode's *The Pageant of Cuba*.

The lady who was eager to talk about Conrad had now left the pool, and I was alone for a few minutes with Cuba. She was disappointed in me (I mean the lady) because I did not warm up to literary conversation; and in fact I never told her that I had in my pocket Conrad's own cigarette case which I was taking with me as a talisman. I didn't tell her because it would have been a perpetual opening (a windward passage) into intellectual palaver. In fact the only person to whom I ever showed or mentioned it was a hard-boiled business man in Peru.

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Absurd phrases or tags of memory come into one's mind when alone in the pool. The words in my head were What Maysi Knew. That same headland had perhaps seen the original *Santa Maria*. I was disturbed to realize that I know practically nothing about Columbus—"The Genoese" as poets prefer to call him; easier to rhyme. Poor old Columbus, got there without a Genoa jib such as they describe in the America's Cup races. When we make fun of high-pressure merchandizing we must remember that it took years of incessant badgering before Isabella was sold on the idea of having America discovered at all. Columbus himself was no great captain or navigator; he was first trained as a wool salesman; the way he kept saying *Sail on and on* to the prudent mate shows he was simply a man with a fixed idea. Columbus was a Customers' Man with the devil's own luck. And even at that he himself hardly knew what he had discovered.

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The important thing was not a bunch of tropical islands but the Trade Winds themselves. . . . But around the corner of Cape Maysi there was also a town called Daiquiri, a name with more immediate association. I went to get dressed for Mr. J.'s party.

The moral of the whole Spanish Main and El Dorado legend is perhaps that the treasure you find isn't always the one you thought you were looking for.

In the hot sunlight that lives south of Jamaica we rumbled SW towards Panama. The maps in my atlases are printed much too pale a blue. We had passed between Haiti and Jamaica but without seeing them, so I could dismiss them from my mind—which has great powers of dismissal. I gain my geography not by systematic study but by personal association. Haiti, to me, is where my friend Bill Hall has had a good time,

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Jamaica where Bill Footner ditto. There are photographs taken by Bill Hall, letters written by Bill Footner, that prove to me these places exist and have enchantment. I am grateful to these islands for having pleased such discerning men. In fact a chapter of agreeable literary savor could be inserted here about the time Bill Footner and Hugh Walpole were both in Jamaica. It is unlikely to be written. This might have suggested, as I stood on the foc'sle head that morning, meditation on what can and what cannot be written about. Journalism is gravely handicapped because it deals with identities and facts, crude lumps of circumstance. But so many situations, awarenesses, are too tender, too humorous, too grave, to be transmitted with the handicap of personal identification. They can only be savored in the infinite peace and pleasure of one's own mind, where the best literature lives. To anyone sensitive to finer shades of truth, a

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gruesome unreality is often apparent in even the most conscientious news sheet. People simply don't behave or motivate like that. What game, we ask ourselves, is the writer playing? What's he trying to put over? Even a quite mediocre novel is truer to life as we feel it.

But in that sedative glare of sun I was incapable of thinking. Why should I? I'm anxious now to get on toward the Pirate Gold of Panama: there is still treasure there: I've seen it. What buccaneer's hoard or Crusoe wreck was ever so rich as that marvellous jumble of goods on the piers at Cristobal? The conquistadores were small-timers compared to the great coffee and cotton traders of today.

So I omit much. But we must at least record the great Plumbing Mystery, one of those misfortunes that happen even in the most careful ships—I remember a corker in the gay old *Caronia*. No Chief or Purser can possibly foresee

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everything that may be committed by unpredictable humanity. Perhaps it was inspired by one of those green devils the evening before. Did person or persons unknown, fatigued with celebration, plan to take a 3 A.M. hot bath, find the water turned off, and forget to close the handle? Did the flow presently resume and pour steaming through the vast faucets of Shanks and Co.? Or did the culprit simply fall asleep in his tub? At any rate, good Mrs. N., returning to a remote mining camp in Chile with clothes and gear to last her family for two years, was waked by shrills of alarm from the next stateroom. "Is there water in your cabin?" cried the adjoining lady. "Is the ship sinking?" Mrs. N. swung out of her berth and found herself a foot deep. But, experienced traveller, she knew this was no foundering, for the water was hot. Even the Caribbean is not so warm as that. The carpet was afloat, and she took a swashing tumble on the

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linoleum floor; but her first thought was to reassure her next-door neighbor—whom she found sitting in her berth rigid with dismay. The whole alleyway was in flood. So as we took our forenoon swim the hatch had a homely backyard look with the wardrobes of Mrs. N. and others laid out to sun. There were even trays of vegetable seeds for her kitchen garden in the Andes. I hope some day she'll let me know whether those tomatoes came through all right after their warm bath.

Such are the unaccountable chances that plague steamship routine. Only those who have looked a little behind the scenes know how difficult is the job of a public liner. Sometimes I sympathize with my old friend Captain Gissing, who, after some experience of passengers, one fine day put them all into the boats and left them there on a calm sea. He steamed away into the uncomplaining silences of Length and Breadth.

Capataz de Cargadores

IF YOU were bred in the publishing business you very likely associate new scenes with book titles or tags of quotation. And it is silly to suppose that only the books you have actually read have influence upon you. One of my treasures of resource, for instance, is that I've never read *Nostromo*, though I've got a general hearsay notion of it, and the musical phrase "Capataz de Cargadores" was often in my mind on this voyage. In fact I don't think I was ripe for that book until I'd had a glimpse of South America.

As we approached Panama I found myself

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saying privately, "Sunlight in New Granada." That also was the title of a book I hadn't read; by William McFee. I've read it since and can truthfully say it should be in the hands of every Caribbean traveller. I don't need to tell you that McFee always writes well, but something in his Latin-American theme moves him here to special harmony of word and insight. And there, far off to our left, was a mountainous coast which I supposed might be New Granada (as Colombia was once called). Was it the peaks of Darien? I had a Keatsian thrill. But the chart outside the smokeroom convinced me it was probably the San Blas mountains behind Porto Bello.—*Porto Bello Gold*, I said to myself, by Arthur Howden Smith.

And on the other hand the map-reader was satisfied to note the Golfo de los Mosquitos, where history makes its first record of those punctual insects. The diminutive *-ito* (*mosca* =

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fly) always carries to my mind a feeling of affection, misplaced here. I put down without shame my small increments of language, for at least one purpose of these notes is to teach myself a little Spanish. Up to the time I describe, our three solid gains were *Desayuno*, *Almuerzo*, and *Comida*, together with *Santa Maria's* excellent menus for those three meals, usefully printed in parallel columns of English and Spanish. *Sopa* and *Leche* and *Huevos* were fairly easy acquisitions; so also *Jamón* and *Tortas Calientes*. Uncooked breakfast foods we found were *Cereales Crudos Norteamericanos* which admirably conveyed a Castilian hauteur. *Papas Fritas* or *Tocino a la Parrilla* give the etymologist a little more to think about. *Riñones* was one I never could remember, and didn't have sense enough to connect it with the French *rognon*; many times in Lima I would order that dish, hopefully believing it something I hadn't tried; it was

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always kidneys. There's a little rhyme you hear on the West Coast that embalms the perplexities of the beginner—

Where the *sopa* isn't soap

And the *ropa* isn't rope

And the butter's meant to kill ya—

which, I'm sorry to say, is a pun on *mantequilla*.

So it wasn't strictly New Granada, and it wasn't sunlight, for the afternoon was muggy and overcast. It was the rainy season on the Isthmus, and our first impression of the Canal Zone was intermittent shower all evening as we strolled the official quarters of Cristobal and the arcaded sidewalks of Colon. We came alongside the handsome big piers at Cristobal just at dusk and a noticeable surprise was the number of Hindoo longshoremen with turbans. It seemed somehow to justify old Columbus's notion that this was the way to the Indies. An umbrella hooked over one arm is the frequent companion

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of the Canal Zone worker. That was an accurate bit of stage business in Somerset Maugham's play *Rain*, for a tropical drench comes down as suddenly as when you turn the handle in a shower-bath.

The surprises of a tropic scene never lose their delight to northern gaze; and perhaps particularly when you go off the ship as we did, at night; explore your way through the dark and gradually identify the unfamiliar vegetables. The glorious royal palms, mango and almond trees, hibiscus hedges, are wholesome aperient to the constipated mind. But even on that first evening ashore there was a blunt reminder of the political tightness of the world. We were with shipboard friends who were returning to their Canal Zone job and had gone to the railroad station to telephone to their home on the Pacific side. At that moment arrived the evening train from Panama City, and there was a brisk explosion

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of latent small boys. They seized bundles of newspaper from the baggage car and scattered in all directions, crying emergency. It was the late edition of the *Panama American* (a double-ended newspaper, beginning English one way and Spanish the other; a journalistic Janus) with headlines of a War Scare in Europe. That was the evening of July 26; I would have to look up files to remember exactly what the crisis was; but I suppose that all over the globe the evening newspapers of that date carried messages of alarm. I sat on a bench in the railroad station of Colon and wondered whether 1914 had come round again. We had not been devoid of news on the way down: in the very seas that are haunted by pirate memory we read (in our mimeographed news-bulletin at breakfast) of the death of a contemporary outlaw, Dillinger; but we had the comfortable abstraction of the vacationer; what happens while he's away, he prefers to think, will not really matter.

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I do not attempt to conceal the perfect simplicity of the innocent eye. You will forgive it in one raised on Philadelphia's sacred Main Line when I confess my first thought on seeing the long lines of freight-cars on the pier at Cristobal. *P. R. R.* they were lettered, and for the division of a second I thought it was enterprising of the old Pennsy to have grabbed off the Isthmian trade.

Perhaps this is the place for a literary note. Just across from the railroad station in Colon is a book and stationery shop. The three most conspicuous volumes in the window were Aristotle's Works, a Winston Dictionary, and an Oxford Press edition of Emerson's Poems. The Emerson had evidently been there a long time. Other titles on show were *The Culture of the Abdomen*, *Synopsis of Midwifery*, *Muséo Secreto de Nápoles*, *Poems by James Whitcomb Riley*, and miscellaneous books by Ruby Ayres, Elinor Glyn,

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and J. S. Fletcher. And also, if an old publisher's reader can speak his heart, a dusty copy of a gay sentimental little romance that Eugene Saxton and I fell in love with in MS, twenty years ago I guess, out at Garden City—*Bambi*, by Marjorie Benton Cooke. Mr. Saxton, I'm sure, hasn't forgotten that he wrote a charming booklet for the trade about that novel (under the reversed initials "S. F. E.") and after reading the MS we sent the author a telegram: *Bambi is ours. Love at first sight*. One reason perhaps why I never got so much steamed up about an agreeable German book with the same title, a few years ago, was that I had given my youthful heart to the earlier *Bambi*.—I rather suspect that this odd mixture of books gives as good a clue as anything else to Panama's gamut of tastes.

Twenty-four hours or so before reaching the Isthmus passengers begin talking with anticipation of cabarets and night clubs. At Colon most

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of the gang hasten off to the Atlantic, or to famous bars such as Bilgray's; the favorite among the waitresses, as soon as they finish duty, is "Kelley's Ritz." I couldn't imagine anything I was less anxious to see than a typical tourist cabaret, but I was greatly interested in a glimpse of one of the fine clubhouses run by the Canal Zone administration (for Canal Zone employees only) and where, as also in the huge Commissary Stores, the C. Z. staff can buy both amusement and necessity at substantial discount. The Commissary is like a big department store, and the Canal Zone employee pays his purchases with folders of scrip. All sorts of goods seemed to be there, from clothes and furniture to groceries and toys. It was stupid of me not to ask our friend Warren Pitman, who was kindly showing us round, whether books are also commissary.

But what fascinated me most—far more than the shops of linens and laces and souvenirs, where

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dark merchants all accost you as you pass with "What you say, Chief? What you say, Big Boss?"—was the pier itself. Now I saw *Santa Maria* at her actual job, which is shifting cargo. I stayed up late to watch the orderly rumpus. Under brilliant lights the clusters of white booms forward and aft were like clumps of tall birches. Enormous crates marked DODGE (tractors, I think) had to be diagonaled out of the hatches; a group of passengers watching burst into clapping when they finally eased off one monster. The mate was pleased, but said that wasn't so much. "Wait till you see us handle airplanes, or a whole trolley car." In the long shed every pile of merchandise was ticketed for its destination. That incredible warehouse of goods was a perfect Mercator's Projection. A great flock of iron-tripod cooking pots, singularly primitive in look, and to be used I suppose in Indian villages, had come from Wapping per S.S. *Dakarian* from

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Liverpool, now to be transshipped to Punta Arenas. (Would there be anything at the Atlantic Night Club more interesting than just that one word *Wapping*, with its various kick-back into literature? I went to Wapping once, with H. M. Tomlinson; he showed me the very docks where Conrad used to tie up, and the pubs frequented by W. W. Jacobs's sailors.)

To make tally of all the stuff on that pier would fill a whole chapter. Bales of cotton, bundles of barrel staves, sheets of corrugated tin, casks of gum rosin, cans of Borden's Dry Ice Cream Mix going to Amapala (never heard of that place), cases of Heinz's Olive Oil to Natalgalpa. In the stupefying warmth of the pier it was ironical to see boxes stencilled KEEP FROM FREEZING. I can tell you, if you want to know, what they're drinking nowadays at the U. S. Legation in Bogata—our minister there has sound taste, for I observed cases of Graves and

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Beaune and Three Star Cognac. I should like to be assured, if it was a *white* Graves, whether it was a reliable *cru*, for there has been a good deal of complaint in regard to the cheaper white Graves; it sometimes is a bit sulphury. If a good wine it is preferable to Sauterne. But the legation's idea was reasonable: a Bordeaux, a Burgundy, and a brandy are the very least that a diplomatic dinner can get by on; and it was pleasant to think that the new President of Colombia, then about to take office, would undoubtedly be formally pledging some of the contents of those very cases I was studying on the pier. I warn our diplomatic service however to be wary of the word *Beaune*, which requires further qualification to be certain of honest vintage. I recommend Volnay, Pommard, Corton, Aloxe-Corton, or Savigny. If in doubt, communicate with M. Chauvenet at Nuits-St. Georges or M. Chevillot of the Hotel de la Poste in Beaune

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itself. The word Beaune without further identification means about as much as the word cheese.

Most of your fellow-passengers, buying silk shirts or driving over in open carriages to see the hotel on the water-front, will think you quite mad to loiter on a hot pier taking inventory. But it gave me a memorable picture of what a cheerful busy place the world is when given a chance. The bulletin board at the checking shed (some way up from the piers, by a railroad siding) notes every day how much work is on hand. At dusk there is a great squawking of parrakeets in the palm trees as you read the notice:—

10 *Ship Gangs Tonight*

Stanley, Robert, Chase, Willie, Lucas,

George, Sam, Chunga, Parvis, Trumpet.

Those being the names of the native foremen. I inquired about Trumpet, and was assured that

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was his real name. Chunga, perhaps, is the Hindoo with turban and huge beard who looks like Santa Claus—a fine figure of a Capataz de Cargadores.

And they're all much too busy to wonder or worry why you ramble along those rows of freight. Here are piles of cocobolo logs going aboard a northbound ship. Wonderful dark wood, iron-hard. When I used to pore over Sears Roebuck catalogues as a kid, pocket-knives were always said to have cocobolo handles. "Some day I'm going to make me a cabinet out of that stuff" said a C. Z. policeman who noticed me admiring the grain of the logs. Here are bales of hides, sacks of coffee from Salvador to New Orleans, crates from Japan to Barbados. There are several bags of mail from Valparaiso to Tegucigalpa; who would have supposed so much correspondence between those two? Pilchards in tomato sauce going to New York, where from

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I could not tell. I don't often hear about pilchards; does New York eat many of them? California is sending sardines, asparagus tips and evaporated milk to Callao. Coffee also from Salvador to Trondhjem and Bergen and Oslo and Barcelona. Oil going to Salaverry—which amused me; it's like coals to Newcastle or fleas to Buenaventura. Rolls of roofing and automobile tires to Callao. Calculating machines to Curaçao. Boxes, contents not stated, from Hong-kong to Kingston, Jamaica; and to Demerara. Other boxes carefully marked *Stow Away from Engines and Boilers*.

Good Lord, I said to myself, is anyone fool enough to want to start another war and break up this orderly flow of trade?

And, since passengers must be amused, here are movie films addressed to the Purser, S.S. *Santa Lucia*, Wilmington, Calif. So I can tell you what pictures the *Santa Lucia's* crowd were

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looking at on their voyage East. The cans were marked *British Agent, Whale of Yarn, Shuffle to Buffalo, Beauty Spots of World*.

The United Fruit Company's *Santa Marta* was berthed just ahead of us at the pier. Was it the same *Santa Marta*, or an earlier one, that took Bryce to Panama in 1910, when he made notes for the finest descriptive piece that has ever been written about the Isthmus? The Canal wasn't then finished, but his chapter might well be reprinted in any anthology of prose.

VI

The Canal

WE ALSO had Friday forenoon to ramble in Cristobal and Colon. This is the real thing in humidity, I said to myself; but thinking about it afterward I am convinced that I have felt just as heavy tepid air in the Seventh Avenue subway. The traveller likes to persuade himself how different things are going to be; but perhaps everything is always the same everywhere. We thought the weather was very odd in Lima; but the day we got back to New York was perfectly Peruvian in temper. The vehement contrasts of New York's climate are a useful preparation for

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the explorer; nothing in the way of weather really startles him.

And it is not always the things that are different that startle the stranger; sometimes it is the things that, surprisingly, are almost the same. I think perhaps I was most pleased by the morning train on the Panama Railroad, pulling out to cross the Isthmus. It was such an orderly and accustomed-looking Northamerican train; it might well have been the 8:47 A.M. from Roslyn to Penn Station, the observation Pullman *Ancon* taking the place of the two club cars in which our Long Island nabobs ride. I suppose the man in blue overalls in the open door of the baggage car is quite calm about his glimpses of tropical jungle. He leaves Colon every morning at 9:25 and arrives Panama City at 11. The fare is \$2.40; a chair in the observation car is 50 cents extra. The train is well filled; a flutter of white shirt-sleeves at every open window.

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Were there showers that morning? If so I don't remember them. The family, who went strolling with Dorothy P. (a lifelong resident of the Zone), say there were, but that Mrs. P. had a special way of walking that prevented one from getting wet; perhaps a sort of graceful epicycloid curve along the arc of the rainfall. If it did rain, it was always just the other side of the street; or sheltering arcades were handy. I remember masses of cotton-wool cloud, and a delicious cool breeze moving through moist indolent warmth; a pervasion of languor and idleness. But I don't speak in any mood of envy: our friends in Panama never get the kind of exquisite day in which I now write, the cool and many-colored sweetness of Long Island October.

Cristobal, you understand, is the official port, with docks and coaling station and Post Office and barracks and Commissary, part of the Canal Zone; Colon is the native city, in the Republic

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of Panama. Cristobal, despite palm trees and parrakeets, is mostly Northamerican; as the children said, it is only semi-Colon. To cross the street from one to the other is to step into a different world, a different notion of life altogether. I symbolized it for myself by copies of the *Saturday Evening Post*—which are precious reading matter in Cristobal, but in the market of Colon are used to wrap up fish. Don't miss the market, a brilliant kaleidoscope of vegetable colors, a bewildering assortment of fruits, peppers, roots of all shapes. You'll hanker for a pencil able to sketch innumerable oddities of complexion, feature, and costume. One dark old crone, with a red kerchief and smoking a cigar, was absorbed in arranging her sales display—a pattern of little piles, each consisting of a lettuce leaf, a slice of melon, a sprig of some sort of parsley.

So, for a couple of enchanting hours, I just

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idle about. The open carriages with big umbrellas and a musical two-toned gong amble gently by—on the left hand side, as is Panama's road-rule. It is said that the left hand convention was due to the vast number of negroes from Jamaica who worked in digging the Canal. They were used to the left-hand rule, and it was easier to adopt their habit than to teach them to change. Street traffic moves with comforting slowness. Time suddenly retards to a more lenient pulse. I notice that at the *relojero's* shop the wooden sign-board, facsimile of a watch, is painted at perpetual 8:18. It must be meant for p.m., not a.m. I don't imagine a Panama watchmaker open for business so early. At the newsdealers' I see a magazine prominently displayed—*Todamerica: La Revista para la gente que piensa*—but alas, I reflect, no magazine can get on with as small a circulation as that. It's the May number, still waiting for its thinker at the end of July.

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There are wonderful groggeries for sailors and soldiers. I follow some of Uncle Sam's orange-colored army shoes with box toes along the Avenida Bolivar. Around a corner I come suddenly upon the ship's doctor buying one of the innumerable lottery tickets which are displayed everywhere. He looks a little sheepish; and I also, for I had just been reproaching the children for spending their pocket money on such unlikely odds. But then I learn that a friend of a friend of a passenger once won two thousand dollars. It's only ten in the morning, but a glass of beer tastes very good. The bars are typical of seaport towns. I was sorry to see one called Moulin Rouge, which is surely an imitative and outworn name. If it had been the Pizarro or the Sir Henry Morgan or the James Bryce I'd have gone in for another beer. In the Moulin Rouge I see (from the street) a surprising painting of an old church legend: a knight out hunting in a forest on a

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white horse; he sees a stag with a sacred nimbus behind the horns. In the Lighthouse Bar an elderly bearded gentleman was sitting very placid reading a Spanish book.

Most of the tourists keep along Front Street, where the souvenir shops are. Perhaps it's as well: the Avenida Amador Guerrero, a little further over, probably has some justification for its name. But what a vista for a painter's eye: the long perspective of rickety arcades in soft plaster tones of green, yellow, blue, fawn, and pink. Down the middle is a ragged plot of coarse baked grass, and shirts spread to sun. There are movie posters in honor of Anna Sten. The picture is *TORMENTOS DE PASIÓN*, and Colon is told that Fräulein Sten is *La seductora mujer de cara de ángel y corazón de hiena*. The steamship folders always hasten to tell the tourist that Colon was "once one of the world's wickedest cities." Just what they mean by that I don't know; but I'll

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grant you that when first seen in a black rainy night the narrow side alleys look very uncertain. But just what calculus is there for graduating the comparative wickedness of cities? Colon probably stands aghast at the imagined depravity of Hollywood. Meditating this I see a notice that the Theosophical Society, Panama Branch, is to hold two public lectures. C. Jinarajadasa, M. A. Cantab., will speak on *The Destiny of the Latin Peoples* and *The Future of Brotherhood*. As one who has also made occasional public palaver I feel a fraternal and professional kindness toward Mr. Jinarajadasa. I find myself wondering what college he attended at Cambridge, whether he knew Lowes Dickinson, and how the Theosophical Society pays the expenses of its traveling mahatmas?

It's getting near sailing time, I loaf back toward the ship. Perhaps Friday is pay-day in

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the Canal Zone, for long lines of colored employees are lined up at the grocery counters in the Commissary Store. The Zone makes sharp Jim Crow distinctions: there are different windows at the Post Office for the two races, and I noticed on the Canal locks the drinking-fountains had two little porcelain basins—one white, the other chocolate-colored. The big negro on Front Street is patrolling to sell his tall conical hats of cocoanut fibre; another is offering baskets of lilies; the brightly repainted taxis are touting for trade; but Colon has learned that the *Santa Maria's* crowd are not lavish spenders. "What you say, Big Boss?" comes automatically from the white-garbed merchants along the Arcade, but it sounds less hope than habit. But the *Mauretania* will be in tomorrow with several hundred tourists, and things will look up then. Past the handsome steamship offices with their palms and hibiscus, past the old whitewashed Spanish anchor which has gone to ground for

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good outside the Post Office; past the boathouse where the smart official launches are tied up, down to the docks again. More ships have come in; the *Peten* of the United Fruit Company among them. She took Ambassador Sumner Welles to Havana at a critical moment in Cuban history. Every one of these Caribbean and South American steamers is as full of stories as a volume of O. Henry. I hope they all carry a copy of *Cabbages and Kings*.

There is still a little time to idle along the shore, in the instinctive desire to make the place real to oneself. You will notice the big metal disks on the hawsers of all the ships, to prevent rats climbing aboard. Beyond a grassy strip, opposite the piers, is a rocky sea-wall from which one looks across to the Hotel Washington and the residential section of Cristobal on the further beach. By a railway siding is a work-shed and a big fire of rubbish, driftwood, and old sleepers. A bonfire burning in that tropic sunlight has an

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air of strangeness; one associates open bonfires with colder air. The blaze gives off a shimmer and quavering of tense vibration. Across the bay the palms and bungalows tremble slightly in a blue as pure as alcohol flame.

Santa Maria was already under way when one of the official launches came speeding alongside with one of our passengers. We chaffed Mr. O., a mining engineer returning to Chile, for he's a veteran on this run and too experienced a traveler to be late for the gangplank. He explained that as he came toward the pier he met the Port Captain, who had kept him for a few minutes' chat and promised to get him aboard regardless. They had not seen or heard of each other in forty years, since they were classmates in a country high school—somewhere in Ohio, I think he said.

I think I have lingered over these small things because I'm scared of any attempt to describe

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the Canal itself. It is no theme for tall talk. More effective is simple workman's prose. Compare with Bryce's chapter a poem written about the same time by a first-rate poet. Stephen Phillips, who had done work of genius, essayed the Isthmian theme. (See *Panama and Other Poems*, John Lane, 1915.) I have long preserved it as a dark example. Apparently Phillips feared that the Canal tolls were not going to be fair all around. He begins: "Palter not, sons of Washington, for gold" . . . and continues:—

Ye marry sea to sea, and tide to tide,
Atlantic bridegroom to Pacific bride;
"What God hath joined, let not man put asunder!"
Thus saith the Church in ritual of thunder. . . .
Nor e'er did mind give matter such a fall,
In wrestle that might hand and brain appal. . . .
Chagres by Dam stupendous of Gatun,
Transforms its valley to a lake immune. . . .

It is better to stop here. A poet can slide as badly as the hillside at Culebra.

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In the Canal there is none of that odd Proustian feeling the traveller occasionally experiences in strange scenes: the wish that this were over and safely in the past so that we can own it, make it ours, find some secure meaning in it. Going through the Canal is pure experience; the mind cannot deform it with double meanings or meditated afterthoughts. Perhaps the sharpest memory is the luxurious lunch served on deck as you skim steadily across Chagres Lake. Tomato juice, jellied consommé, cold meats and devilled egg salad, peach sherbet and almond layer cake. Sir Henry Morgan, who sweated and scrambled through a valley now drowned a hundred feet below your keel, what would he have said to that? A tough fellow, I have no doubt; we put down a cold gin-and-ginger to his memory. Overhead buzz the planes of the Isthmian airway, the midday train from Panama City screams in the distance, the warm green-

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house smell of the jungle blows across the deck, and oldtimers will tell you that now, while we're in the lake, is a grand chance to go below and get a fresh water bath.

You can cross the isthmus in 30 minutes by plane, in 90 minutes by rail, but why not stay aboard ship and really see it? The 44 miles of waterway take between seven and eight hours. It is infinitely more beautiful than I had ever supposed; the unparalleled hideousness of most of the picture postcards gives a wholly false idea. The Canal, except in the locks, no longer seems an artificial cutting but a natural stream. After the first stretch to Gatun it is not a straight and narrow ditch but first a broad enchanting lake of islands (the old bristle of dead trees has mostly disappeared) and then a green winding river with grassy shores and rising cliffs. Butterflies hover across the bow, birds chant in the underbrush a few yards away, a crocodile slips into the stream

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from a muddy shelf, a waterfall spumes down a rocky slide. After days of salt that muggy earthen savor is sweet to breathe. Untouched jungle is only a stone's throw away, and as the ship bends through the narrow strait round Barro Colorado (which sounds so lovely and means Red Mud) you open new vistas of hill and tanglewood. The hills are not high; Cerro Balboa, where the wild surmise of the Pacific probably was had, is about 1150 feet; but they are abrupt and picturesquely bumpy. The sonnet was perfectly justified in calling them peaks.

VII

Culebra

WE HAD a delicious dump of rain in the Culebra Cut, straight crystal stripes of water, the vertical lines of pour as close together as the straws of a broom, yet each one, apparently, separate. The actual physics of rainfall must be very interesting. Every spout and scupper drummed and gurgled. The chief officer, in oilskins and sou'wester, standing by with the carpenter on the focsle (to let go the anchor if need be) tucked in his head like a yellow turtle. The rain was so thick I could not properly see the bronze memorial tablet (to Gaillard and his men)

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on the rocky side of the passage. Culebra of course means snake: whether the name was due to some special nest of serpents found there, or to the bends of the canal, I don't know. That most famous bit of the working is now generally called the Gaillard Cut. It is easy to see that the engineers had their troubles. Great masses of fallen rock, raw flanks of red soil, show what has occasionally happened. Dredges, floating derricks and machine shops, are moored at Gamboa with steam always under pressure. They have proud and cheerful names, something like *Hercules* and *Titan*; I wish I had made exact note of them. It looks as though the bad places in the cut had now been scraped far enough back to be under control, but an earthquake is always possible in that region. (That same morning we had heard of a quake some way up the Panama coast [near David, I think?]) and a fellow passenger told me seriously that a United Fruit Company pier up

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there had dropped a mile under water. He was an accountant, too; presumably a rigorist in figures. I should love to know what were the actual facts.)

The banks of the Canal in this slithery part have been sown with strong-rooted grasses, to help hold the soil together. Just so, I was about to say to myself, did Walt Whitman sow his Leaves of Grass on some of the most insecure slopes of the mind . . . but I promised myself not to clog the Canal with double meanings.

Except for a side glimpse of the old French workings, and little ends of rusted rails sticking out from the rock, high up the side of Gold Hill showing where the old construction line ran, there are few evidences, between Gatun and Pedro Miguel, that this was not a genuine river. "The greatest liberty man has ever taken with nature," said Bryce; but Nature, in the feminine way, has condoned and rewarded the impudence.

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The management of the Canal gives a strong impression of order and efficiency. Accidents happen, of course; sometimes a cable snaps, or a ship may catch a gust of wind just as she enters a lock and take a sideways sheer; but to the eye of the observer the whole routine is marvellous in care and dispatch. Each lock is a park where gasoline lawnmowers are at work on the lawns, and the embankment of the great Gatun Dam is a golf course. The Canal is under strict military surveillance at the present time; a platoon of tents was laid out on each lock terrace, and men with bayonets on sentry-go along the piers. This was remarked by oldtime passengers as something new.

The great gates swing to behind you, the handrail of the gangway across them rising automatically at the same time. The water churns and heaves under the hull, the great ship lifts smoothly, perceptibly. After the three steps

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up, at Gatun, you look astern and see the Atlantic far behind you and below. The electric mules, double-ended motors with an ingenious capstan, warp her along. As they take the steep hump from one level to another, these engines make a loud braying squealing sound. Hence, I daresay, their nickname.

It's odd that none of the maps show the bends and twists—almost right-angle turns, some of them—in the deep-cut part of the Canal. The ship slows down almost to standstill, her whistle booms and echoes in the narrow gorge. I was never quite happy, by the way, about *Santa Maria's* whistle. She's an oil-burning motor-ship and has no steam; consequently her siren is a sort of huge buzzer, a glorified automobile horn. I miss the husky mellow chord, the deep roaring threat and dignity, of the old steam whistle, jetting its plume of pride.

All through the Canal the passengers are alert

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and excited. We skip from side to side, forward and aft, even up the ladder to the very topmost deck where the engineers play tennis and basket ball. This is not really a deck, more (if Captain Cook will allow the word) a roof over the sports deck and not officially available for passengers. The dog kennels are up there; also an occasional stowaway (until the mate finds him), but he soon regrets it, for the brig is handy. The forward funnel is the brig: a fine, big, airy cell inside the dummy stack, with a barred window giving a superb lonely view. Either by indolence or a habit of deference to ship's etiquette I never visited this open promenade until we were in the Canal, but I immediately christened it (for my own purposes) the Silence Deck and found it thereafter ideal for strolling and stars. If the night is dark and windy, however, be wary of the big fishnet surrounding the engineers' tennis court. Groping under or through it you can get wound up like a fly in a web.

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That solitary topside is a grand place to watch the evening movies, thrown on a screen alongside the after mast. Not so much the picture itself as the whole spectacle of the picture being shown *al fresco*, the ship's company sitting below on the hatch, the passengers in decorous rows above, the flitting shadows on the screen and the loud grinding, crackling, surresonating voices bursting out of the sound box—which sways gently on a cable in mid-air. There is the slow shine and fade of cigarettes below, the wide glitter of stars above. The pictures, I suspect, are chosen with care for a lowest common multiple of taste; and how delightfully meaningless are the howls of Tarzan or the neigh-and-whinny of some wild horse panorama (I forget its name) when heard from above on a night of tropic stars. Even the dog in his kennel (the only other listener up there with me) was not fooled, but lay quite impassive.

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But I was saying that the passengers get a real thrill out of the Canal. The Spanish-Americans (presumably they have seen it before) are noticeably less excited than ourselves. Yet on our return voyage even the Three Nuns, who lived otherwise in a sacred abstraction, became secular enough to show some curiosity about the working of the locks. I saw them, in file as usual, standing on the bridge to watch. This was very likely our kindly commander's gesture to console them for a fright they had had. They were sisters of some French order; demurely they paced the deck with eyes downcast upon their breviaries. They ate by themselves in the children's dining-room, they turned their chairs inward toward the deckhouse for meditation. Repeatedly they crossed themselves against the disorders of the deep; or perhaps at some secret tabulation of mortal error. The face of piety is never more convincing than upon a *religieuse* who in addition to her voca-

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tional humility feels also the strong interior qualm of a wambling gizzard. But matters being so, one night a lady passenger was taken with a psychopathic lapse. I shall not be specific; it was an aberration quite frequent and in the relentless chemistry of nature. But it took the form (or so said report) of beating on the door of these sisters' cabin at a midnight hour. In the sincerity of some hallucinated despair the sufferer bespoke the nuns to rouse themselves, for the ship was sinking. And the most unmaritime sisters, only too ready to suppose that human unworthiness must expiate, hastened into robes and trimmings and fled to the boats. That this actually happened I cannot vouch; every well-ordered ship is wisely secret about the details of her endless astonishment. But equal strangeness undoubtedly did. Shall I forget the evening when a hardy soldier of fortune, dressed (for a costume party) in full wartime panoply of the Colombian army,

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was waving an enormous revolver at the cocktail table. With illustrative gesture it passed to and fro among ladies and juveniles, its innocence warranted by our hero. It came to my hand, and I found it loaded.

We seem, like those spouts and gutters, to overflow our theme. But one word more about the rain. Those heavy clouds you see, off to your left, over the hills of the Chagres valley—in a direction you naturally suppose S.W., but really N.E.—are the motive power of the Canal. It is the overflow of the Chagres River, fed by Panama's eight or so feet of annual rainfall (in the interior) that supplies light and power for the whole operation. This is harnessed at the Gatun spillway, and there you find most soldiers and guns to prevent any Rape of the Lock.—Nor need one suppose that the Canal is something finished and complete. An enormous new barrier, the great Madden Dam, is just now being finished

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some miles up the Chagres River to control and regulate the flow in case of any possible drought.

Softly our *Maria* takes her two steps down at Miraflores, and the way is open to the Pacific. As you slide along that last reach of Canal you are so intent looking for the new ocean you may not notice that the sun is setting on the wrong side of you—apparently in the North. As a matter of fact you are 20 miles or so farther East than you were at the Atlantic end. The harbor of Balboa is serene in the dusk. Lying at anchor is a beautiful schooner-yacht bound on a fishing trip to Galapagos: this we know from one of our fellow passengers who is going in her as guest. Now again the crowd is all agog about night clubs. The Miramar, I hear it bruited about, is the place to go. The only other places I hear mentioned are the relics of Old Panama (about seven miles away; an overgrown tower and a few clumps of stonework remain of the town sacked

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by Sir Henry Morgan in 1671) and a certain famous flat arch in the ruins of the church of San Domingo. This is said to be an architectural paradox; according to customary formulæ it couldn't possibly support the weight. But as the church is in ruins, perhaps it didn't? What I would most enjoy would be to climb Ancon Hill, the commanding knob that overhangs Balboa. But one wouldn't see much at night; and besides it's an official reservation I believe, not approachable without permission.

So I have not much to report of Balboa and Panama City since we were there both times in the dark. There is the same contrast between the two as at Cristobal-Colon. Balboa is North-american, the administrative headquarters of the whole Canal Zone; Panama, a gay and frolicsome city of some 70,000, is the capital of the Republic. One divines at once a keen rivalry or jealousy between the Atlantic Side and Pacific Side; with,

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frankly, the odds both of scene and climate in favor of the Pacific. There will be plenty of touring cars waiting outside the pier to drive you over to Panama in the warm scented evening; but if you go afoot to explore you will soon stumble on a delightful little trolley which is more amusing and much cheaper. You'll have a chance to admire the superb avenue of royal palms that leads up to the Canal Administration Building. If it was a tree of that sort which Sir Francis Drake clambered up for his first view of the Pacific he was a puissant climber.

The night is soft and hot. The tram threads a winding course past a cemetery, barrooms, odd little shops, glimpses of native interiors in tawny kerosene light, puts you down in a lively small plaza where the citizens are out for the after-dinner *paseo*. A fine old church shines pink in the brightness. Someone told me afterward that this was where the gold-plated altar was whitewashed

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to conceal its wealth from Morgan the buccaneer. On reflection, how can this be? The present city of Panama was not built, I think, until after the destruction of its predecessor in Morgan's raid. Anyhow the big wooden doors were shut when I got there, and a brown dog couched against them was gently chafing himself into nescience. I strolled rather blankly along the exciting pavements of the Avenida Central, and saw some of our passengers rolling in open cars toward the fabled night clubs. But it had been a long day afoot, and the pedestrian was reminded of the flattened arch. Back at her pier *Santa Maria* lay large and brilliant, solid and familiar. The smokeroom, deserted now, was a fine place for ginger beer and the detective story. Perhaps I should add that this book, the only one I actually read on the southward voyage, has utterly vanished from my mind. I pursued it methodically, perhaps twenty pages every eve-

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ning, but as a spiritual creature I was no higher than the slumbering dog at the church door. The story was of that exquisite mediocrity which in no way disturbs the intellect. I can't remember its author or title; not even its publisher.

VIII

Southern Cross

SANTA MARIA shifted her berth during the night; we woke at the Oil Company's dock where she refuelled. Rich perfume of petroleum was heavy on the warm still air. It has suddenly become intimate to me, for we have lately installed an oil-burning furnace at home. Gazing at that beautiful machine, with its various clocks, gauges, and cut-offs, I understand a little better (but not much) what McFee and other engineers have been talking about so long. You should not miss Mac's essay *Oil, and the Hairy Ape* (in *More Harbours of Memory*). "A world that, al-

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most without comprehending, is running on oil," he says. Now, when I push up the thermostat a notch or so, and hear the answering roar of flame from down below, I feel closer to *Santa Maria* and her massive chief engineer, Mr. Giordan. It's odd to think, though, that the old musical clang and scrape of a coal shovel on cement floor, sound familiar for half a lifetime, is gone forever?

We're under way at 9 A. M. sharp, and there's the alert feeling that now we are setting off into a new world of which we know nothing, hardly even by hearsay. The islands of Taboga and Taboguilla lie on our starboard bow like huge blue crocodiles asleep; beautiful with hills and apparently little frequented. But just as we are getting out into the gulf we make a bend and come to, gently rolling, off a fortified rock. Some important passenger is to be picked up: a Colombian official, I believe, who has transhipped from some other steamer at Cristobal

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and crossed the isthmus by the morning plane. This gives us time to brood a little geography and note that if you want to go from the Atlantic side of Colombia to the Pacific you can best do it by way of the Canal. Now comes the *Owl*, a fast official Canal Zone launch, and our visitor climbs aboard. He has two suitcases, a roll of maps, and a clump of jazz-gourds. These, I speculate, were probably made by some instrument factory in the States to provide South Americans with their native rhythms. The necessity of furnishing other countries with their own specialties is one of the pleasantest features of international trade.

So past the Pearl Islands and onto the ultra-marine Pacific. We are a week out this morning; the usual North Atlantic voyage would already be drawing to an end, but *Santa Maria* has only accomplished about a third of her southward run. The swimming tank is being filled again; the children are eager for their first plunge in

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Pacific water. Deck tennis resumes, and there is an increased consumption of Planters' Punches. Oldtimers on the West Coast are beginning to loosen up with some of their best yarns for the benefit of the greenhorns. Mr. O. tells the story of the U. S. consul general in a South American republic who had been too much high-hatted by his ambassador. The consul was an informal soul, the ambassador rather the opposite extreme. When the consul was moved on to another post he was given a farewell dinner by the North-american colony. All looked forward to hearing whether the departing officer would make any allusion to the personal feud. He told an anecdote of a colored preacher who was ousted from his pulpit. "Gentlemen," said the parson, "I bows to yo' decision, likewise yo' jedgement. But as I walks down the aisle of dis church, my galluses ain't fastened to the back buttons of my pants. . . ."

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Perhaps it's partly reaction after the excitement of the Canal, perhaps there really is some lulling effect in the long gentle swell of the Pacific: at any rate I remember that first day out from Panama as the drowsiest of the whole voyage. I know I slept through the boat-drill, which I had honestly meant to attend. By this time also you have probably abandoned your good resolutions toward moderation of drink and diet. Iced tea and cake in the afternoon; Planters' Punch and lower-case sausages before dinner. Or was that one of the evenings they served small hot tamales as appetizers? Certainly the most delicious cocktail companions I ever tasted. You remind yourself that life is uncertain and full of nemesis; one might as well take the fat with the lean. Nor are those before-dinner moments in the smokeroom the least instructive of the adventure. Over in one corner is the continuous hollow rattle of the dice-cup where the oil-company

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emissaries are playing that complicated game of wager called *Capitan Manda* (the captain orders). This is a great favorite among "tropical tramps," as the West Coast veterans call themselves; it is admirably adapted for stringing out a series of drinks over a period of time. You learn to say *Salud y Pesetas* (health and prosperity) as you raise the glass. The polite little China-boy stewards are careful to serve the cold tumbler with a tissue napkin under it; otherwise, in that moist air the condensation forms a pool on the table. But by now the younger generation, waiting with extraordinary patience in their deck-chairs just outside, have begun to look hopefully through the smokeroom window; it's time to go down to dinner; and along the corridor comes the orchestra's favorite tune—

*You may not be an angel,
But still I'm sure you'll do,
And till the day one comes along
I'll string along with you.*

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The time will come, and soon enough (you say to yourself) when you'll have to go back to thinking. You'll even find yourself trying hopelessly to put down on paper some of this which is now so warm, humorous and actual. But for the moment you are content to live it. Also a quite new and disturbing notion comes into the mind of one who travels for the first time with offspring old enough to make their own society. He realizes his unimportance. Biologically considered he is irrelevant; of no value save as parent and treasurer.

Perhaps by antithesis to these ideas I found in myself that night a curiosity about the stars, which had a very unfamiliar look. I was anxious to see the Southern Cross: partly literary sentimentalism (such a nice thing to write about), but I remembered how it had pleased me on the way to Hawaii. I couldn't recognize it, however, and the purser didn't seem much help in locating

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it, so I tackled the third officer, on duty on the bridge. After some scouting the best we could do was find two sparklers of the constellation, just setting behind a bank of cloud. I made frequent inquiries, but all the nights thereafter were cloudy, and that was my only glimpse of the Cross. Even if I had seen it I should have been very little wiser. As the shrewd Santayana once remarked, "To most people, I fancy, the stars are beautiful; but if you asked why, they would be at a loss to reply." When you see people stargazing it is customary to suppose they are filled with thought; in my own case I find that a view of sky well speckled with those pinpoints of perplexity wipes me clean of any sort of cerebration. I can discover nothing in my mind but faint annoyance and nausea. The nausea may be physical, a crick of the neck; the annoyance (or alarm?) is spiritual. This of course is when the stars are considered merely as spectacle, without

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any geometrical purpose.—Veils of murk rose on the horizon, lit by lightning flares.

I had written the above—and then, this very night, at home, I looked out about 3 o'clock and saw Orion. His tricorn hat tilted rakishly forward, his striding feet set wide apart, belt buckled up and “knife of planets at his thigh” (as in Cornelia Skinner’s fine sonnet) he was making his winter march over the dogwood tree. The hound Sirius, brilliant and quivering, trailed him faithfully. Great companion of the night! How often I have greeted him where he watches over my back door. Even more intimately than the Bear (because we can’t help see him shaped so human, like a child’s cartoon) he seems a comforting token of the permanence of things. Permanent enough for our purposes, anyhow—and I was sorry to have spoken too offhand. Probably it is better not to write at all about the stars.

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And by the way, I have discovered the ideal name for *Santa Maria's* stargazing top deck, where the funnels are. I find it in a favorite old book, *Rollo on the Atlantic* (1858). Next after its illustrations, the high point of that work is Jacob Abbott's joke. The pilot, "from his lofty lookout on the paddle box," calls out "Port!" The officer on deck, and then the helmsman gravely repeat the order. But a "dashing-looking young man," walking on deck, ejaculates "Sherry!"

"Whereupon," says Abbott, "there was a great laugh among all the passengers around."

It is painful to think that some of our own cherished cracks will seem just as flat 75 years hence. But anyhow Rollo has an excellent name for that topside promenade. He calls it the "smoke pipe deck."

The next day was Sunday: an air both brisk and balmy, soft and sugared like honey. Far off to leftward, mountains wreathed in cloud. The

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Andes! This was evidently to be a day of doings: the swimming tank was roped off and on the rail above a sign

PELIGRO! *No se aproxime*

was translated crisp and sailorly as *Danger! stand clear*. After breakfast we were going up a broad river, strangely tropical in look. It was low tide, the Blue Pigeon (the sounding lead) was flying; the leadsman calling up to the captain: "By the mark five, sir." "A quarter five, sir." On a muddy beach a tiny cabin on piles and thatched with leaves showed against the jungle backdrop. Paddling thence came a cayuca, a dugout canoe hollowed from a tree-trunk; two colored men plying long spear-blade paddles, and the colored pilot. *Santa Maria*, slowed down, was still moving faster than one supposed; or perhaps it was the stream of current and ebb: the cayuca wedged under the grating at the

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foot of the gangway ladder. The thin cigar-shaped canoe upset, one man for a moment caught under the grating. They wriggled nimbly and the dark pilot came pattering up, wet and grinning. Their paddles had floated away: the cayuca was hoisted aboard in a sling, one man riding its slippery bottom like a monkey. The drama of the scene was in the wives of the trio, who had rushed out of the thatched cabin with dogs and urchins and ran knee-deep into the water to watch. Through binoculars the anxious stillness of their attitude was eloquent. That black woman standing against mud and jungle with her hand unconscious on her frightened heart gave the tropic scene a human gloss. Wives are the same everywhere.

Buenaventura

THE steamship company's folder tries earnestly (in a brief prose passage which is a miracle of suppression) to give the idea that Buenaventura is just another picturesque town. And so, some day, I dare say it will be. But at present it is far more interesting (if you don't have to stay there long) than the most romantic arrangement of plazas and basilicas—and night clubs. (Night in Buenaventura would be something really worth seeing.) Your first feeling is one of dismay: is it possible, you naïvely wonder, that all South America is going to be like this? Our excellent

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skipper must have been amused when an eager passenger asked him "Where's the best place in this town to have lunch?" His answer was brief, immediate, and surpassingly true. "Right here." And the motley throng on the pier (every shade of black, brown, and lemon) know that well. All the time the ship is alongside the galley ports are besieged by uplifted palms eager for our over-plus. An apple, I noticed, is a delicacy they specially prize.

I don't think it's possible to give you any fair notion of Buenaventura: you wouldn't believe me if I did. And I think frankly that perhaps I like it better because it plainly has so much future and so little past—at any rate architecturally. If there ever were any comely old Spanish buildings they were wiped out in the fire a few years ago. Between the modern piers and the rabble of scantling huts that make up the native town is a wide open space, where future

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streets and plazas are hopefully indicated and where grasshoppers or crickets of some sort are stridulating in the coarse grass. The new railroad station and town hall are under construction. Then there is the little square with the statue of Bolivar: but you will realize how humble Buena-ventura is when you see that the Liberator had to do without his usual horse.

Only the very daring tourist makes entry very far into the native town. Life there, under a sullen climate of heat and wet (I was told, very likely inaccurately, that the rainfall averages near an inch a day) reduces to prime elements. The narrow alleys climb steep grades of slimy clay; rickety cabins perch on piles over quagmires of litter and sewage. Perpetual sluice of rain, and a high tide from the bay which sweeps up a gully in the heart of the whole midden, presumably help to keep off plague. The naked babies everywhere are so black that there seems

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almost a blue tone in the pigment. I wonder if it is a diet of bananas and fish that so bulges out their little paunches? The women and girls all carry on their heads long shallow wooden bowls with a few handfuls of beans or green sass in them. One of those bowls, if you could ever get it properly clean, would make a beautiful sideboard ornament. A delicacy which a small boy tried hard to sell us was ears of corn sprinkled with sugar (and flies). I think he lingers in Titania's mind as in some odd way symbolic of the place. "He was so black," she says, "and the corn was so yellow."

The assembly of fortuitous dogs is extraordinary; you would not believe that even the haphazards of canine congress could produce such amazements of surprise breeding. Almost equally haphazard seemed the strings and tangles of electric wiring crisscrossing everywhere among the flimsy streets; it is not surprising that the

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more pretentious part of the town burned down a few years ago. Besides electric light, the Singer sewing machine (one of the world's triumphs of distribution) has made lively penetration. And the favorite footgear of man, when any is worn, are sandals cut out of old automobile tires—the black treaded rubber of the outer tire for sole, strips of red inner tube for the straps.

I have no economic thesis to offer, and no pleasure (ever, anywhere) but to set down what I see. As a gateway to South America Buena-ventura is certainly superb for it is unlikely you will ever have seen or imagined anything like it, unless perhaps in Cutcliffe Hyne's stories of Captain Kettle in the villages of West Africa. But what makes it melodramatic is the contrast between the big modern piers, with their shiny new automobiles being unloaded, the neat bags of coffee coming aboard; and the squalor of the native town behind. In spite of which, observe

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the cleanness of many of those on the pier. The cotton trousers and singlets are fresh washed; the dresses are crisp and of gay colors. And wander as you will you see faces certainly happier looking than in the mean streets of New York. He must be very wise or very certain who will be too positive about the laws of human satisfaction.

I think as a matter of fact we caught Buena-ventura just at some turn of economic tide. Even in the three weeks' interval until we were there again things had happened. On our second visit they had actually started to put in some kind of drainage; men were digging deep cuttings in the pale wet clay; and the most unhappy looking person I saw there was an American engineer sitting on a box supervising a group of workmen toiling in a sewage trench. Some of his gang were splitting wood with a machete to light a fire and melt some lead. I offered them a cardboard folder of matches to start the blaze

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They were puzzled to know how to light matches of that sort; evidently had never seen them before.

The morning train for Cali (the Ferrocarril del Pacifico) was just leaving as we docked; so our Colombian passengers—including the very kind General who gave one of the children some beautiful stamps—must stay over at the hotel on the beach until the next day. That hotel (run by the railroad company, I think) is an epitome of the hotels in distant ports described by Conrad or Somerset Maugham. Here we drank some good beer and bought postal cards. The queue of small black supplicants—whom we had rashly encouraged by giving away some coins—could not pursue us there. Our Colombian friends were falling to upon their almuerzo with good spirit, but we felt our Spanish incompetent to the dangerous task of selection; and anyhow the Captain's advice was sound. We had lunch on the ship. Those

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who were bound for the interior—Bogotá, for instance—had three days of travel before them, although the bee-line distance is not much over 200 miles. The train that leaves Buenaventura at 11.30 A. M. reaches Cali at 6 P. M. and there you spend the night. You leave Cali early next day, get to Armenia for lunch, and then go five hours by motor bus over the mountains to Ibagué. Another night at Ibagué; leave there 10:15 A. M., you reach Bogotá at 6:15 P. M. the third day. Always a lover of time tables I ferreted out this information (but I don't guarantee these connections) just to tantalize myself. It was one of the many things we had to miss; but at least it's exciting to know how it can be done. And now you can realize also why travel by air is increasing so inevitably in South America. The hangars of the Panagra Airways are plainly visible just across the river from the pier.

After lunch I fought off lethargy and wandered

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the docks and railway sidings. I said to myself, with a surmise almost as wild as the Spaniards' in the sonnet, here I am in South America. For just those two words, I don't know why, had always been to me a label for the superlative of distant and unlikely. Perhaps it is their musical cadence, the one slow syllable and four quick, which makes them sound to me more remote, more beautiful, than the name of any other geometry—except perhaps California and Czechoslovakia. The strangeness and poverty of the place was emphasized by the handsome profile of *Santa Maria* with her smart green funnels rising high above the sheds. In places so foreign the mind seeks instinctively to make them feel home-like to the mind; even if it is only the tough grass and rubble heaps of a dockside freight-spur one reflects that they are closely familiar to *someone*. The sleepy hum of insects, under a furious prostration of sun, made the scene couth and agree-

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able. There were mechanical reminders too of familiar things. The travelling crane on the pier came from Ipswich in East Anglia, a town dear to me; the locomotive loitering thirstily under a water tank was built by Baldwin of Philadelphia. These two were prophetic of much seen later. British and American capital side by side working at these far resources. Romulus and Remus at the udders of the big bad wolf of South America. Indeed, if you are going to go fantastic, you can well think of that chain of Andes peaks as the inverted dugs of some vast animal mother—offering such nourishment of natural wealth as even the conquistadores scarcely dreamed.

I was amused at a characteristic remark uttered by a very intelligent Englishman on the ship, a veteran of the West Coast returning after many years' absence. "What a pity," he said, "that the English or the Americans didn't get hold of these republics and make real countries

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out of them.” (He put it a little more strongly than that.) This comment, superbly appropriate to our grasping race, leads into an infinity of meditation. For my own part perhaps I am grateful to see the spread of English and American efficiency occasionally checkmated. It has already gone farther and deeper in South America than you would ever suppose. But under the hull of an old blistered launch, pulled up in the shade of a tottering tin roof, lay two Colombian citizens blissfully asleep. No matter how much cargo *Santa Maria* had to shift before the evening tide they were going to enjoy their siesta. I was pleased too by a humane touch in a poster at the railroad station on the jetty. It said that the Ferrocarril del Pacifico in hiring employees gives preference to fathers of families.

Buenaventura may seem remote to you, but it is closely tied in with the ever-tightening web of human affairs. At the alcalde's office is a notice

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that the next lot of hombres due for military service will be called up on such and such a date. (If the recent trouble between Colombia and Peru had come to formal warfare Buenaventura would have been the first to suffer.) Those innocent looking green knolls across the river are said to conceal guns; and on the pier are huge cases containing airplanes from Hagerstown, Md., addressed to the Minister of War. Up at the far end of the pier was an elderly steam cutter which seemed to constitute the Pacific squadron of the Colombian navy. She was built in Normandy and had once been very smart but her crew were gutting fish all over her deck and her brasswork was foul. Her name was *Carabobo*, which sounds Venezuelan to me; she had a most taking air of one who could tell good stories.

There's enormous wealth of goods in those big piers, but perhaps not much of it sticks to the fingers of Buenaventura. The parson of the tin-

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roofed church just behind the piers has his troubles. As it is time for another lesson in Spanish I cannot resist the thesis in manuscript fastened to the church door. It said:—

En lugar de venir a pedirme dinero prestado, tenga usted la gentileza de ayudarme a pagar 1500 dólares que debo a la Casa de José Campanyá de Barcelona por le imagen del Resuscitado y la de San José. Precisamente por haberles prestado a hombres sin conciencia me aprietan las deudas.

EL CURA.

This I construe as follows: "Instead of coming to beg me to lend money, have the kindness to help me pay \$1500 which I owe to the Joseph Campanyá Company of Barcelona for the image of the Resurrection and that of St. Joseph. Precisely for having lent money to men without conscience these debts are pressing me."

We went into the church, which was clean, spacious and touchingly simple, to see these

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images. One of George Fox's persuasion might think there is much to be said on both sides.—But the priest has other perplexities too. He has posted up a long dissertation on Marriage covering all the points both civil and ecclesiastical. *Si la mujer es aficionada a los bailes, facilmente despreciara a su marido y sobrevendran graves disensiones domesticas.* I wonder if I translate this correctly: “If the woman is fond of dancing she will easily become scornful of her husband and grave domestic dissensions will ensue.”—Or is it the husband who will become scornful of her?

Crossing the Line

IN BUENAVENTURA, Sunday afternoon and a ship in port make a big social event. *Santa Maria* apparently stands treat to all the smart people of the countryside who motor in from outlying haciendas and swarm aboard for tea and cakes. They are mostly ladies, very brilliant of eye and Brunette in tint, carrying a surcharge of Parisian perfume and a general impression of silk next the skin. They have their niñas with them, daintily dressed in white. The señor, if he accompanies, is likely to be stoutish and dressed in a cutaway coat. A quite different troupe was a party of

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Franciscan priests and pupils in brown robes and knotted clothesline girdles who tramped in careful inspection throughout the ship. One, seemingly in command, was magnificently tonsured. Down on the pier, defended from the gangway by some inscrutable social division, humble Buenaventurans in every shade of black and tan milled about as cheerful spectators. The ships' cadets were bartering cigarettes for green oranges. A small boy with two parrots on a stick kept crying *Loro!* to explain his salable birds. A man clasped a kind of opossum to his bosom; a honey-bear, we were told. These creatures fascinated the Topside Lady, one of the passengers whom I rarely saw except sitting solitary on the boat deck with a dark lonely gaze and an air of emotional exhaustion. She was beset with desire to buy an animal of some sort, but ship's regulations always intervened. In Guayaquil she fell in love with a wildcat displayed on

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the hatch, and hopefully fondled it, but it chewed her hand smartly. Still she yearned for a pet, and some humorist informed her that the chief officer had a wildcat on the focsle head. Sure enough, she went up there to look for it, and Chips had to explain that the "wildcat" is the pawl on the windlass.

There were animals that had yearnings, too. A yellow dog sat all afternoon on the edge of the dock staring anxiously upward toward an after hatch where cargo was working. Trucks rumbled close upon her, great nets of goods swung over her devoted head, constantly she had to shift out of someone's way, but she never took her eyes off the ship. Presumably she had seen her divinity vanish into that hatch and with the whole passion of her soul she waited for him to reappear. Apparently he never did, at any rate not in the same place, for when the ship left at dusk she was still at bereaved and steadfast gaze. Dido, we called her.

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Others also had been thinking of Buenaventura, for picking up the *Nautical Gazette*, one of the few magazines I read regularly, I find an article by Mr. J. J. Collins on the construction of those new docks (finished in 1930) which I had admired. A tablet on the pier which I noted at the time says *Malecón de Buenaventura, obra iniciada por el General Alfredo Vasquez Cobo, Raymond Concrete Pile Co. Ingenieros-Contratistas*. The Raymond Company, I learn from Mr. Collins's article, had their difficulties. The drilling equipment had to be adjusted to a tidal variation of about 17 feet and piles weighing as much as 12 tons were to be placed at an angle of 30° from perpendicular. Bottom conditions were not uniform: in some places a pile would sink 20 feet by its own weight; elsewhere they had to drill through hardpan. The hands, recruited locally, were not familiar with this kind of work and "had to be entirely educated to it

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on the job." It is an excellent thing for the writer, grumbling at the task of putting a few words on paper, to remind himself that there are a lot of occupations that are really difficult. There is also an agreeable analogy in those piles. Often indeed the literary contractor, attempting to put down a line of thought, will find it drop out of sight through sentimental sludge; and again he will encounter the hardpan of the impossible.

That whole series of technical articles about South American ports and harbors, which the *Nautical Gazette* has been printing at intervals, is surely of great value to any whose trade lies in those directions.

By some freak of chance the rain we expected held off until just as we were leaving; it got busy in the evening however, as it had its daily inch to make up. (The annual rainfall there totals toward 400 inches; say over 30 feet, which even

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Noah would regard with respect.) It was a wet black night with glares of distant lightning as *Santa Maria* turned SW toward the coast of Ecuador. Looking back at the sprinkle of lights you might almost have thought there was a real town there. But the more you think about Buenaventura the easier it is to convince yourself it is a fantasy, a nightmare. The contrast between the Raymond Company's solid piers and that squalid huddle of human sties is too violent. Equally unbelievable is the new town hall now finishing in a vacant field—a solid chunk of modernistic concrete, preposterously Northamerican in plan, like a courthouse in Long Island City. Why not have used the beautiful and appropriate Spanish architecture?

That night as a treat for the children our good-natured captain had ordered a Baked Alaska for us at dinner. It was a superb artistic contrast, for as we sat at luxury in the comfortable saloon

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one couldn't help wondering what they were eating in Buenaventura.

The next morning was as different as possible. The air was fresh and dry, the sun brilliant. Far to leftward was a faint blue smudge of hilly coast. The big anticipation of the day was the Equator, for we would cross the line that afternoon. When I went up to the stem of the ship for my forenoon muse I noticed that the purser was in the smoke-room conspiring with a group of oldtimers, rehearsing the traditional rituals of King Neptune.

It was the best morning of the voyage. The tradewind was strong and sweet with an odd fragrance, almost like new-mown hay. It would have been interesting to consider that that lively air, moving from east to west, was the actual draught of earth's turning. Ocean, blue coastline, cordilleras and the sturdy *Maria* herself were all twirling eastward at the world's maximum velocity—about a thousand miles an hour. And that

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breeze I felt, as Jeans reminds us in his talks in *Through Space and Time*, was the slipback of the surrounding atmosphere, which cannot keep pace with earth's turning. It was the simplest proof of our rotation. But this is mere afterthought: I was then indisposed to thinking. It is good to be here was all I said to myself, dreaming in admiration of the flying fish which were bigger and more colorful than those of the Atlantic. Their wings were coppery or lavender, their tails longer: they have a skilful way of keeping themselves in air by flipping the long tail on the water which ticks them again upward. The shadows of great clouds made broad acres of purple and violet across the sea. *Santa Maria's* tall stem, quivering gently with the comfortable flexibility of a well-planned ship, moved strongly into the marbled blue. Looking over the starboard bow, so that the gaze follows the line of the morning sunlight, you can see how the water is laced and veined with

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brilliance, shimmers in planes of fracture like patterns in ice. Squads of yellow fliers, with bodies of steel blue, burst up from right under her forefoot. Tilting themselves daintily on the invisible push of wind they sweep safely away. Others, keeping straight in line with our course, I suppose are eventually crushed—but it is interesting to think that all that empty-looking water beneath is one continual scurry of these darting forms, flickering out of our way. Here's a big lavender fellow—a beauty—with heart-stopping suddenness he flashes up under the loom of our great shearing wedge of steel—for a moment he keeps pace just ahead of the hissing crumble of sea—will he make it?—he flicks downward his long steering tail, which tosses him a little higher—he catches a gust in his gauzy membranes—gains speed and veers away in a long skimming swoop.

At three in the afternoon less graceful creatures

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emerged from the deep. The greenhorns had prudently put on bathing suits to be hazed by Neptune and his court, variously accoutered as Barber, Doctor, Scribe, and attendant mermaids in rope-yarn hair. It would be contrary to the oath to reveal the details of the ceremonial; Mr. J. and the other oil-men from Talara were rigorous to carry through the traditional rituals and japes which are carefully preserved in a huge folder, together with the required regalia, in the storeroom of Fausto, the excellent deck steward. As usual, the neophytes being quite as numerous as the old-timers, there was suggested conspiracy to turn the tables upon the hazing party, but deference prevailed. However, after suffering plentiful emulsions of soap, paste, grease, ice water and what not, the awaited free-for-all eventually arrived. Neptune, who bore a close resemblance to burly Mr. O., the mining engineer from Chile, was respectfully saluted by a com-

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mittee of the new initiates. In souvenir of the occasion, said they, a piece of the mystic Line itself was here for his acceptance. They held out a platter, lifted a silver dish cover, and revealed a tempting scroll. Neptune knew well there was some trick; with reluctance in his eyes he reached gingerly for it; the committee seized him and with one vast heave he also went swashing into the tank. His broad rope-ravelling beard and flowing robes floated wide on the smitten pool.

It was long before the matriculates were properly purged of their various unguents. But the oil men from Talara were in excellent spirits that night. In the smokeroom I heard them singing their favorite anthem:—

*I used to work in Chicago
In a department store,
Behind the ribbon counter—
But I don't work there any more.*

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*A lady came in for some garters,
I asked her what kind she wore:
Rubber, she said—
And rubber I did—
I don't work there any more.*

Guayaquil

THERE are forty miles of the broad Guayas river from the island of Puna (which Pizarro used as a base in his invasion of Peru) up to the city of Guayaquil. This urgent stream, his first equatorial river, gives the passenger much pleasure; it carries down great mats and tangles of loose vegetation, and many odd-shaped craft. (It is the Guayas, as we remarked before, that in a tropic evening smells as sweet as waitresses.) But it keeps the skipper much alert. He was on the bridge, watching carefully overside where one of the cadets called soundings. We were

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going up on the comb of the rising tide, but there are a couple of bars where the silt piles thick. "Mark five, sir"; and then "A quarter four, sir." An experienced seaman judges soundings by the feel of his feet on the deck as well as by the leadsman's tally: when the bilge gets really close to the mud you can feel her drag, hang back, slowed by suction along the bottom. *Santa Maria* was drawing about 25 feet. The little brown-faced Ecuadorian pilot, in a clean but somewhat ragged white coat, was standing by. The skipper felt that sticky, clinging sluggishness under his bootsoles and muttered something sharply. "*Veinte siete—mas o menos*," said the pilot cheerfully. ("Twenty-seven—more or less.") I saw a flash of professional indignation in the skipper's eyes. "*Mas o menos!*" he repeated. A hell of a way to talk to a responsible shipmaster! "*Muy agua*," he remarked ironically, in good Glasgow Spanish.

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My only disappointment in Guayaquil was not the town's fault but Prescott's. He gives one the expectation that all down that coast one is sure to see Chimborazo topping the world. "Few of the works of Nature," he said (writing on Beacon Hill), "are calculated to produce impressions of higher sublimity . . . where mountain is seen to rise above mountain, and Chimborazo, with its glorious canopy of snow, glittering far above the clouds, crowns the whole as with a celestial diadem." And for several days I had been trying to remember a stanza of Emily Dickinson's, something about "Chimborazo . . . Cotopaxi . . ."* But the great mountain itself was hidden in a lofty loom of fog. Several times that day, in sudden shifts and openings of sky, something gleamed blue and opal far away; like fire seen pale through tissue; like pearl wrapped in

*No, not Emily Dickinson. W. P. kindly reminds me that it's W. J. Turner's poem *Romance*, in which those great names are a recurring and magical refrain.

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cellophane. There was something there, tormentingly invisible. Was that it? I will not pretend: the nearest I got to it was a picture postcard in the admirable bookshop of Señor Uzcategui on the Boulevard Ninth of October. Or better still: on the well-deck aft were stacked some barrels of oil, stencilled with the great name—CHIMBORAZO. Against the historian's Boston Assurance I set a ship's officer who told me he had voyaged the West Coast for twenty years and never seen the mountain yet.

The ship anchors in midstream, and is immediately surrounded by a whole navy of small craft. Port officials, with a great deal of gold braid and white uniforms not quite clean, troop up the gangway. Boatmen follow, each with an identifying number in his straw hat (I can't remember whether these chaps were called *fleteros* or *floteros*?) to solicit your patronage for their various launches. The after hatch is rapidly con-

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verted into a bazaar, and the passengers enter into animated bargaining for snakeskins, Panama hats, bows and arrows, stuffed baby-alligators, and ivory nuts carved in likeness of General Bolivar. But it is General Sucre rather than Bolivar who is the hero of Ecuador and has given his name to the silver coin of most frequent currency. It was amusing to see how rapidly the children discovered the exchange value of the sucre and were prompt at vigorous chaffering. The Panama hat, which comes not from Panama but from Ecuador, is the one specialty every traveller has set his heart on. First of all, however, everyone is hankering to get ashore; this is not a jumble of hovels like Buenaventura but a city of dignity and pride. A narrow, sun-baked launch, quivering in the fierce downward push of the stream, takes you past one of the most curious waterfronts in the world. Craft that suggest the earliest beginnings of navigation con-

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trast with modern Dutch freighters lying at anchor a few cables away. Cayucas (dug-out canoes) and primitive balsa rafts are stacked with bananas. There are sailing sloops built high at bow and stern, very medieval in shape, and a long string of the little cargo steamers which travel the network of rivers that feed the Guayas. Their names are music: *Yolanda*, *Rosa Elvira*, *Luz Marina*, *Mesias*, *Lola*, *Piladora Susana*. You land on the Malecon by two pretentiously handsome buildings, the Palacio Municipal and Palacio de Gobierno. Our steamship folder calls the Malecon the Riverside Drive of Guayaquil, but it is parked and shrubbed with a gay formality far brighter and neater than Riverside Drive ever attempted. And reaching away before you are the shady arcades of the Boulevard Ninth of October which is the town's Fifth Avenue. There you'll become familiar with the useful word *cambio* (exchange), try to choose intelligently

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among innumerable *sombreros finos Montecristi* (a highly esteemed brand of Panama hat), note the set of Dickens in Spanish in Sr. Uzcategui's *libreria*, or admire the old wooden church of San Francisco behind the fan-palms and the statue of Rocafuerte. It will please your native convoy if you remark on the symbolism of this statesman's name. (An inscription in his honor is neatly cut in little ornamental herbs around the statue.) And when weary of chasing to and fro you can sit in the shadowy arcade (as do Mary and Betty the waitresses, after serving a big *almuerzo*) with a glass of good Ecuadorian beer. The *Nautical Gazette*, my authority on all South American trade matters, tells me that the native beer has now supplanted previous importations from Germany and Denmark.

Guayaquil has had a good deal to overcome, besides earthquakes. She is one of the very few large cities that have grown up practically on

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the line of the Equator; and though Professor Jeans reminds us that on that latitude the earth's centrifugal spin should make it easier to break jumping records, the climate does not encourage high-jumping. Feeling the soporific onset of that meridian sun I was the more aware of the energy required to build those massive arcades, the new Government Palace, the long stone quay. I sympathized with the proprietor of a suburban *quinta* who has an amusing aviary around his house, including the great condor, the national bird of Ecuador. The swift stream of the river is gradually carrying away his back garden, but he does not seem to be worrying about it. How long I myself, even in the brisk air of Long Island, would postpone any such problem. And only a few years ago Guayaquil was notorious for disease; old travellers will tell you how they took elaborate precaution to avoid the city when going inland to Quito. The mere fact of having visited

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Guayaquil ensured quarantine on arriving at other South American ports. But after the triumphs at Panama, General Gorgas and men trained under him were called in, screens and pure water supply installed, and fever is now said to be as low as anywhere.

Perhaps it is a reminiscence of her old-time death-rate that one of the sights you are sure to be shown is the cemetery. It is a white vista of vaults and niches on a secluded slope, surrounded by trees unknown to us (I think they named them as algaroba and cholquin). An avenue of royal palms leads up, through warm afternoon silence, to greater royalty still. Above, the rough scrub of the hillside is thickly set with wooden crosses for those who could not pay their way into the reservation. Our Latin friends are usually dramatic in their mortuary devices: I saw a tablet in memory of one who had been killed by a motor truck, and the carving gave a grimly precise

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picture of the accident, with the departing soul (helped by two angels) hastening skyward up a sort of runway. Guayaquil is surprisingly active with motor cars, and may yet find them (as we have) quite as deadly as anopheles or stegomyia.

I pause here and ask myself awkward questions. What, of such jumbled memories, are most important to retain? And can there be the slightest value in such chancy superficial glimpses? The other day, a cold winter evening, I met by chance on Long Island a fellow passenger from the *Santa Maria*. He was no longer the bronzed vacationist, he looked pale, rather fiscal and downtownish. We spoke, casually, of Guayaquil. "It all seems like a dream," he said.

And dreams are difficult to hold. What would an Ecuadorian remember of a day spent on our Long Island shore? And would it tell us anything helpful? If I should ask one small girl who was with us what comes to her mind she would say,

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probably, the burros and little black pigs running about the outskirts of the town. Another young woman, a trifle less small, mentions the humbler cottages of cane or bamboo, and the trim little villas in a new residential region. Searching my own skull, perhaps I find some special suggestion in those volumes of Dickens translated into Spanish. Or the crowds gathered along the Malecon as we went back to the ship. A parade was preparing; we had seen groups of children lining up to march with decorated floats. Señor Don José Maria Velasco Ibarra, the new president-elect, was about to arrive from somewhere by plane, and the town was turning out in his honor. For them also a New Deal was beginning.

Most of all, I think, my mind dwells on that big brown river, rippling so strongly down between the parallels of jungle. A strange blue light hangs over it upstream, queer shifts of cloud, gilded by sunset, curtain in the town. Beyond its low hills there seems constant move-

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ment in the sky, slopes of cordillera briefly seen, immensities half suggested. In such a lure of shade and color the Spaniards might well have been eager to press on and to believe anything. It was in that country they first heard the legend of El Dorado. And to me that wide flood with its surly flux of current, its torn rafts of floating foliage, its strange canoes and hothouse smell, was the nearest I have come to visualizing great tropic rivers dear to me in print—the Congo of Conrad, the Amazon of H. M. T. And the Guayas, though not large as American rivers go, is a sort of uncle to one of the greatest. There was a certain conquistador who came to bring reinforcements to Pizarro at the island of Puna. His name was De Soto, afterwards discoverer of the Mississippi. But the Guayas was his first big river.

For myself, I consider with due restraint the man who went out to see Chimborazo and found only a postal card.

Industria Peruana

THIS evening you are going down the Guayas River inhaling the musk of warm equatorial forest; the next morning you are at anchor off a barren coast of cliffs and sand with winter in the air. During the night you have come to that westernmost shoulder of South America (Cape Blanco) which with comely symmetry is so nearly opposite the easternmost bulge on the Brazil side. Just about there you meet the cold water of the Humboldt current. One of my unfulfilled intentions has been to drop in at Alfred Paine's Salt Water Bookshop and learn some-

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thing about Alexander von Humboldt. You hear his name often enough along the West Coast. The swimming tank is quite a different place from now on. No matter how often you were told at home that August would be winter below the equator, in the swelter of New York and Panama and Colombia you couldn't quite believe it. Yesterday you were buying Panama hats in Guayaquil; today you're hunting for an overcoat or your warmest sweater.

The red and white flag of Peru is up on the foremast; rolling in a moderate swell, *Santa Maria* drops her hook towards a steep gravel bluff where a long barracksy bungalow is evidently the bachelor club the oil men have spoken of with sportive affection. (The Madhouse they call it; Casa de Locos.) Whatever you expected in your first glimpse of Peru (I don't quite know what I did expect), Talara is probably quite different. Certainly I had never heard of it be-

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fore, nor had a good many geographers. I didn't even know that the great Peruvian desert (which runs all the way along the coast to about 30 degrees south) is rich in oil. In a certain atlas I have, published 1917, oil is not even marked on the economic map of South America. But Talara is a petroleum faucet and nothing else. The wells themselves are inland, invisible over the rim of the desert plateau that closes the view. Somewhere in there too, I was told, are marshes of pitch, used by Pizarro to caulk his ships. But by now the oldtimers on board are telling you so many good yarns that you are wary. The skipper has brought out the excellent old Bostonian anecdote about the man whose beans were cooked upside down; and the chief officer has advised you to watch the anchor very carefully when it comes up from the mud because once it brought up a gold doubloon.

I don't suppose there's a word in the gazetteer

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that has richer or more romantic sound than Peru. And it was somehow appropriate that in this chilly, bleak, ugly desolation men were obviously as busy as Pizarro in getting out wealth. Sandhills, pipelines, boxes of canned oil and gasoline going down a conveyor into a lighter; a big Danish tanker (*Anna Knudsen*) waiting to be filled. These small darkish men in overalls along the pier, running trucks of oil, stacking piles of cases, were they the descendants of the Incas? But it is better not to speculate on the ethnic map of South America. That way lies incredulity.

Talara, a company town of the International Petroleum outfit, is evidently young and strictly business. Terraced up the bluff, with neat bungalows and surprising little green gardens irrigated on sand, are the homes of the officials. The native quarters are down below; there is a market there which some female passengers visited and re-

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turned with earthenware dolls and jugs and shrills of enthusiasm. I was content with a scramble up the hillside to a powdery plateau where one looked over the cold gray ocean. A big surf was creaming across the wreck of a barge. In a row of snug little cottages with flowers, kiddie kars and babies, International Petroleum wives looked out speculatively on the little group of tourists. The green funnels of *Santa Maria* must cause a twinge of homesickness sometimes. There was an oil man from Oklahoma who was going inland, to some of the wells, for a two-year stay. He looked a little grim about it, but seemed to be sniffing the oil-strong air with familiar pleasure. Certainly Mr. J. and his friends returned to the bachelors' club in a mood of jubilee; but then as accountants they would not be there long. On the hillside we encountered a whiteish dog with one haunch poised in busy friction. There, said the experienced Mr.

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H., is your first Peruvian dog, in a characteristic attitude. Nor is it only the dogs, as we had opportunity to learn later.

A look into the factory as we went by showed innumerable bright cans being filled with oil, boxed and stencilled INDUSTRIA PERUANA. This somehow amused me because I divined that even behind the busy Canadian boys who seemed to be running the show the really serious Inca was probably Mr. Rockefeller. It had struck me, studying the maps, that Ecuador is shaped exactly like a slice of mince pie, and I heard of some Northamerican Jack Horners who were doing an excellent job of plum-picking in that sector. The shape of Peru is different but certainly the plums are there. From the first crude glimpse of that extraordinary country, and with always increasing emphasis, the most casual observer is aware of its astounding possibilities of wealth. Even the bowels of birds have turned into cash.

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I refer of course to those islands, whitened with guano, which shine like icebergs farther down the coast. The steamers, with decent respect for capital, give those crags a wide berth and refrain from whistling, not to alarm the birds.

I do not often envy accountants, but those travelling oil-auditors must have an interesting job. They are in a very ancient tradition, too. There was a peaceable expert in figures, one Augustin de Zarate, a Castilian comptroller, who was sent to Peru (after Pizarro's assassination) to try to straighten out the colonial accounts. In so doing he found himself dangerously involved in the civil wars of the time, and had the good sense not to write down his full reports until he was safely home. As Prescott pleasantly paraphrases him, "those do wisely who allow their accounts of their own times to repose in the quiet security of manuscript, till the generation affected by them has passed away." So his

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history was first published at a safe distance—in Antwerp, in 1555; it did not appear in Spain until 1577. And browsing through an old catalogue of Maggs Brothers in London I find a facsimile of the title-page of the first English edition, in 1581. It shows a drawing of “the ritche mines of Potosi”; you must remember that the “Peru” of the sixteenth century included a good deal of what we now call Ecuador, Bolivia, and Chile.

No, the barrens of Talara are not beautiful; they are very different from my vague recollection of Frank Stockton’s old yarn—was it *The Adventures of Captain Horn*?—which I think gave me my earliest notion of the Andean coast. But they are unquestionably rich; in the complicated web of economics I now realize that those very sands probably paid for a delightful and luxurious lunch I enjoyed a year ago with an oil magnate in Toronto. And if the great scheme

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ever goes through which I heard mentioned in Lima, of a new trans-Andean railway from Sechura Bay, Talara will be in strategic position. Students of the mountain contours told me that from Sechura, not very far south of Talara, is the easiest route to wriggle through the great cordilleras; by a tunnel 16 miles long (they said) the Andes can be pierced without going much higher than 4,000 feet. (Or something like that; I made no notes; don't hold me responsible.) If you can once break through those 150 miles you're on the Marañon river; which farther down changes its name to the Amazon. Once you've seen the Andes you don't talk lightly about breaking through them; but if I were a youngster with economic prescience I'd be tempted to hang around Sechura Bay and think about it. A Pacific outlet for the whole Amazon Basin—which could be settled, said my enthusiast, with the overplus of European population and solve the greatest economic problem of this age.

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That sandy coast is not beautiful in a close-up, but it shows marvelous opal and tawny lights from shipboard a few miles out. As cold morning mist gives way to brilliant sun, mountains of unbelievable jagged shapes appear. The long beach abuts on steep lionskin slopes. Behind are range on range of fantastic notched and tilted cockscomb profiles in deepening tints of umber; turning blue and pink in afternoon. The whole dazzling shine of the Pacific seems fractured in prism colors on those horrific sierras; and then, behind them, disclosed in partings of crystal cloud, greater mountains still, lonely and appalling. Whatever you say of them can give no suggestion of their cruel and beautiful completeness. They give the passer-by an exquisite pleasure, because they are so safely far. With something of relief you see them fade into the dusk; you take to the smokeroom to practise your newly learned Spanish toast, *Salud y Pesetas!* More human, more encouraging,

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are the Peruvian lighthouses twinkling in the dark; you take a line between them, Lobos de Tierra to port, Lobos de Afuera to starboard. The Wolves of the Land, the Wolves Outside. Avoid them both!

XIII

Potter's Field

WHILE thinking about the Andes I happened upon a piece Stella Benson wrote some years ago. It's called *The Awakening*: she describes a broken-down old god who had become garrulous and senile. He's talking about some of his early triumphs when he was going strong:—

A good mountain should be on a crescendo note. You put all the gentleness of your theme into the lower slopes, making them fit for mosses and grass meadows—meadows that are stroked with silver by the blowing of a summer wind. Then, as you add alp to alp and precipice to precipice, you mix the earth of stronger stuff—soil that will hold strong sharp

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trees upright so that their crests tear the cold mists to shreds. But the peak of the mountain has only to support the delicate memorial of perpetual snow. The peak is the ordeal of the creator. It is naked line, of course—a poor workman cannot cover up mistakes with easy trees. The peak must be eccentric and terrible and—witty, if you know what I mean.—I expect this all sounds silly to you. We ex-gods have great difficulty in not being thought silly.

But even the lower slopes of those cordilleras don't seem to have any gentleness. Has no one ever called Prescott to account for his imaginary descriptions of the Peruvian desert, his "valleys of loveliness, enamelled with brightest verdure"? It makes grand reading, but I can hear the boys at Talara and Salaverry laughing. What a pity the historian never took a trip along that coast, where it rains only once every forty years.

If mental comfort has any value, it was an error to disturb my complete and perfect ignorance about Peru. If a man is well occupied in his

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own small concerns maybe it's better he should stay that way and not begin wondering about things he won't have any chance to study carefully. There's plenty to think about right here—in the subway, for instance, where one is sometimes oppressed with a mood of cynicism. So many odd irrelevant people: it seems fantastic that they should all take so much trouble to keep on living. A freakish desire seizes me to ask them why they do so: and then I cackle with mirth because they are very likely thinking the same about me.

When you've had a glimpse of the Andes it doesn't leave you quite the same. You can never again glance without emotion at the schedule of West Coast steamship sailings and see that long list of ports which you have unconsciously memorized by seeing them day after day on the map in *Santa Maria's* smokeroom alley. Buena-ventura, Guayaquil, Talara; Salaverry, Callao,

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Mollendo; Arica, Tocopilla, Antofagasta; Chañaral, Coquimbo, Valparaíso. Will we some day get all the way down to Valpo? you ask yourself; and gosh, what syllables for a poet! Has no one ever written a ballade of the West Coast? And small items in the newspapers that I would otherwise never have noticed catch my eye and set me thinking. Three lines in a United Press dispatch, last October, told me that the new docks at Callao are now in service. Occasional brief allusions suggest that the Peruvian government is having its troubles. On November 30 a New York *Times* correspondent cabled (from Buenos Aires, the censorship in Lima having kept things quiet), "In Peru the government reports Federal troops have recaptured two towns held by the rebels for more than two days . . . a large force of civilians, led by Apristas, captured the towns of Ayacucho and Huancavelica." On January 7 a cable said, "Cajamarca was the

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scene of an abortive revolt yesterday afternoon when 100 armed peasants, headed by a local Aprista leader, captured the police station." The names of those towns have significance to anyone with even a smattering of South American history. The liberals (some people call them radicals) have a way of starting things in the regions which mean much to Peruvian patriots. Ayacucho is where the great battle was fought (in 1824) which finally broke the Spanish dominion. Cajamarca (the Caxamalca of Prescott) is remembered as the town where Pizarro seized the last of the Incas, Atahualpa, and treacherously put him to death. When I saw in the paper that a heroic statue of Pizarro was being shipped from New York to Lima, as a gift for the 400th anniversary of that city, I wondered whether Peruvians do not sometimes grow a little weary of the conquistador, whose leathery and simian mummy lies in a glass box in Lima cathedral.

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It's rather too like sending Chicago a statue of Dillinger or Al Capone. There's a growing tendency among Peruvian visionaries (radicals, if you prefer) to consider that Spaniards, English, Northamericans, priests, and dictators, have had four centuries of pretty good pickings, and that they themselves might now have a share in their country's colossal wealth. It's bad manners to mention such a thing, but I'm a reporter, not just an admirer of mountains. The social seismologist can feel the queerest tremors. There are whispers on dark street-corners, flashes of the eye in conversation, and more bayonets around Lima than I like to see in a city comfortably sure of itself. Perhaps the government would be wise to err a bit on the liberal or lenient side.

Someone had been passing round a book, I forget by whom, which said we must be sure to visit the ruins of Chan-Chan, near Salaverry. The enthusiast who wants to see everything was not

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lacking; the usual delegations waited upon the skipper. "Oh, Captain, will we have time to see the ruins?" It struck me that the prudent skipper was not encouraging. Officers of the steamship company are not keen on passengers going ashore at Salaverry; and after helping to transship women and children from a launch (leaping up and down in the swell) to the iron pier, I don't wonder. Some day some ruin-hunter won't time his leap exactly enough and lose a leg between the gunwale and the dock. I remember a steamship agent in Lima grinding his teeth when he was informed that a cruise-ship was on her way down the coast with 300 Californian tourists, and that some merry agent in Los Angeles had promised them the ruins of Chan-Chan. So let me help out the much harassed steamship office by advising you against it. Of course the children think it's grand fun to take a flying leap onto a slippery iron grating just as the launch soars

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up level with the ladder; but I assure you that paterfamilias, though reproached for being a crab, was relieved when the excursion was over.

But *Santa Maria* was at anchor for several hours; the ship's basketball team were going ashore to play the local outfit (all South America is quite mad about basketball); and not even the skipper's tactful reluctance could dissuade our zeal. The Lady Who Intends To See Everything, and the retired banker from Ohio who was preparing a lecture on the Incas for his "service clubs," were irresistible. Even the large wistful Topside Lady had emerged from her chair on the boat deck, put on her winter furs and was ready for excitement. She got it, poor dear. As we wallowed toward shore, past rows of solemn guano birds sitting on anchored lighters, all was expectation. Then we saw the landing that had to be made. The gallant little Chilean with a blue beret and I tried our best to heave her from the

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plunging launch to the high ladder. Each time, as she rose to the proper level, she blanched, her large plush eyes gazed inexpressible languors of nauseated alarm, and she sank back massively impotent upon the cabin roof. The cheerful mestizos of Salaverry, to whom this is evidently a frequent and favored entertainment, stood in a crowd on the pier above, gauging the chances of some amusing disaster to the gringa. Finally a kind of bucket-chair was lowered, and our friend was hoisted by a winch.

The excitements of getting ashore and chartering a car to drive to Chan-Chan cause my breakdown here as a mercantile reporter. For though I remember the long iron pier built out alongside a steep outcrop of shaly sandstone, and a miniature railroad to carry freight, I have forgotten what kind of cargo is handled at Salaverry. I have a notion it's the outlet for big sugar plantations. The Cartavio hacienda is not far away,

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which also makes most excellent rum. The piśco sour and the cartavio cocktail are two of Peru's most pleasing emollients.

We drove toward Trujillo. Good Mr. H. was with us in the car, sitting beside the driver. We were glad, because Mr. H. speaks fluent Spanish; but I think it greatly increased our perils. For seeing the word APRA scrawled frequently I asked about it, and Mr. H. amplified the question. This started our guide on furious conversation: he took both hands off the wheel to talk with and fastened Mr. H. with glittering gaze. Proceeding so we roared at furious pace along narrow sandy roads lined with mud walls and adobe huts, a region dusty, sombre and slattern, cold gray surf on our left, brown barren hills on our right. Burros were everywhere, carrying great packs and riders as well; most of the riders were women, bundles of black cloth squatted on top of the load and surmounted by Panama hats. These,

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and dogs and children, we just somehow missed. In the neighborhood of Trujillo *Apra* is a fighting word. It stands for Alianza Popular Revolucionaria Americana, whose supporters in Trujillo revolted in 1932 against the government and were most savagely suppressed. You will hear much both pro and con about the Apristas: it struck me as interesting that their leader Haya de la Torre (little pottery busts of whom are on sale in the market in Lima) bears one of the oldest Spanish names in Peru. Among the original 13 who stepped forward when Pizarro drew a line on the beach and called for volunteers was Juan de la Torre.

Trujillo—which Pizarro named for his own birthplace in Spain—is a town one would have liked to explore more carefully. It is not likely to reveal its truth, whether economic or social, to a brief visitor in the pause of noonday siesta. It has evidently been the home of ancient wealth:

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the great houses built round pillared patios have mural frescoes in the courtyards, beautiful doorways and old ironwork. Down a long vista of cobbled street, where the walls were bright with chalky pastel colors, soldiers marched. There is the usual Plaza de Armas, with palm trees, a yellow cathedral, and some sort of gross monument of symbolic statuary and gilt. I think it represented the Republic, but it was dreadful even from far and we did not approach.

The wreckage of Chan-Chan, a pre-Inca city, is not far away. It is a wilderness of rubbish, acres of adobe rubble: great walls of mud-brick, roofless quadrangles, doorways, tunnels, crumbled mounds. There are scraps of skulls and bones, and broken pottery. It's a potter's field in more than one sense, for the Apra rebels were brought out here and shot down; of the bones lying around it is hard to know whether they are the Apristas of 1932 or the ancient Chimus who

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were conquered by the Incas seven hundred years ago. Scrawled on a little wooden cross above a shallow trench is the legend *Fusillados sin sentencia*. High in the pale noon buzzards are floating. As we climbed about this broken metropolis of baked mud, trying to visualize the unknowable, our guide kept saying something about *avispas*. I thought at first that these were another kind of *apristas*, but learned just in time he was warning us against the wasps who nest thickly in the chinks. They hover angrily as you grope among the old walls, like the ghosts of the vanished Chimus.

Anxieties were not over yet. The fool writer of that picturesque book said it was a grand thing to drive back to Salaverry along the beach, and we had believed it. For some reason or other it had to be done at breakneck speed and with enormous swerves to avoid great creaming waves that hissed toward us. Occasionally we skidded

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merrily on gluey patches, or took sudden zig-zags that made the entrails yawn. I asked Mr. H. to suggest to the driver that we were not in a hurry. Some Spanish ensued; and Mr. H. remarked calmly: He says if we don't go fast we'll get stuck in a quicksand. Being a parent is bad for one's nerve.

Lessons in Spanish

WHEN our frigate lay in Callao," writes Herman Melville at the beginning of *White Jacket*—and to my great regret that's all he says about that famous harbor. I suppose the sailors weren't given much shore leave. I would love to know what were his impressions of Callao, and Lima (seven miles away). Charles Darwin had been there a few years earlier (in 1835) and gives in his journal a most grievous report. Literary travelers have not been kind to Lima. Even Bryce, you remember, spent only three hours there—which he expanded into seven pages in

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his *South America*. "A pretty sample of the art of effective travel," says Herbert Fisher, Bryce's biographer. It seems to me a little hasty. We spent two weeks in and around Lima, and as I think back about it I am appalled at my ignorance. I can only set down a few admittedly outward glimpses, without subjecting them to treatment. As an example of naïveté: while we were being driven round the city, the first day, I noticed a building called CAJA DE AHORROS. The Chamber of Horrors, I said to myself: probably relics of the Spanish Inquisition; too gruesome for the children but I'll go and have a look privately. I found my way there later, and discovered that it means Savings Bank.

These notes can perhaps be useful in showing how little the tourist is likely to learn. It is not entirely his own fault. Our first day, for instance, was vivid but confusing: we were taken in charge by the kind, well-meaning but relentless guide

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whom I shall call Mr. Lemon Pie. A Hollander by birth he had once lived in the States where he contracted a great passion for that pastry, apparently scarce in Peru. In moments of relaxation he would brood sadly on memories of lemon meringue and other Northamerican succulents. Evidently he had been instructed by the steamship office that his clients were to see as many sights as possible, without delay. So without even opportunity to unpack our bags at the hotel we were hastened briskly about, from bull ring to basilica, from the President's Palace to the Country Club, passing gradually from ecstasy to indignation. The attention-faculties of a newly arrived stranger are always very tender; it is well not to overstrain them.

Somewhere along the coast a very beautiful big green mantis had flown aboard the ship; it had been rescued by Blythe, and our first concern, even before admiring strange trees and the

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old Spanish fort, was to rusticate this creature in a safe spot. As we drove along the fine boulevard from Callao toward Lima, Mr. L. P. held the mantis firmly between a powerful finger and thumb. It seemed aggrieved and raised its arms in gestures of imprecation. Blythe was disturbed. Eventually it was released, where Mr. L. P. said it would be quite cheerful—in the park surrounding a hospital—but the resolution with which the insect was held was symbolic of the grasp upon ourselves until we had done our stint. Friendly, but very determined. So do not expect precise detail about some of the things we saw. I expect I shall always be puzzled about a charming suburban villa, with a tangle of garden behind it, which is now the headquarters of the corps d'élite, the Guarda Republicana, but was once associated with a lady called Perricholi. I gathered vaguely that she was the favorite of some ancient viceroy, and that Perricholi (which

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seems to mean something doggish) was his pet name for her; and I believe that *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* tells about her. But all I remember is a somewhat parched and bushy garden, with a stone bath and small water-trenches, a tea-tree, and a handsome young officer in shiny riding boots who gallantly cut some flowers for the ladies. *Muchas gracias* was about the limit of our Spanish, so we exchanged elegant bows, and grunts of pleasure. Irrigation is everywhere necessary in Lima for grass and flowers, and I often wished to remark that my mind also was a desert of nouns; until it could be irrigated with a few verbs it was impossible to raise good small talk. But this sentiment was too complicated, nor have I worked it out yet. *Cabeza mia está arenosa, sin agua no puedo cultivar palabras* does not seem, somehow, to get the idea across.

Of the big plaza de toros, which rather suggested the "wooden O" of Shakespeare's Globe

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Theatre on a vast scale, I best remember the advertisements painted on the little barriers behind which the matador can take refuge in moments of crisis. The bullfighter, skipping for his life, is not likely to pause upon the legend *Exija Ud Siempre Te U. S., Es el Mejor* (Always Insist Upon U. S. Tea, It is the Best) but the spectators are sure to notice it. The bull-ring lay vacant in noonday sunshine, there are no killings at that season of the year and I was happy to miss them.

If Bryce had paid his three-hour visit to Lima that August day he would have reported a brilliantly sunny climate. But this was a day of exception, for during the Peruvian winter (June to November) the weather is pretty sure to be damp and misty along the coast. It is quite true that it never actually rains, but there is a fine chill drizzle which has almost the same effect. The small suggestions most valuable to travelers

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are hardly ever made: mine is to beware of rubber heels on their damp pavements which are often of decorated tile and incredibly slippery. I noticed that the newspapers of Lima do not bother to print weather forecasts: everyone knows what it will be. No one bothers much about this cool gray vapor that wreathes over the city in winter, for by going a few miles inland, up toward the mountains, you rise into a region of dazzling sunshine. As you come down from the hills, by train or car, you see the great bank of fog, silver and oyster-color, blanketing the town. Sometimes in late afternoon the mist suddenly breaks, and reveals the distant cordillera, ribbed and grained with amethyst light. The general grayness of the air gives special brio to occasional notes of color: the red linings of policemen's capes, flapped over their shoulders; the great yellow cathedral. It is odd to see a city evidently tropical in humor and construction

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set in a cold London gloom. Most of the houses are built without provision for fires; you understand why the Limeños sit such long hours at dinner, with wine and food and their perpetual carioca tune. It's to keep warm.

Our purposes were utterly innocent; we had nothing to sell, no submarines nor material of war; only a desire to expose the sensitive film of the mind and see what would appear on the *revelaciones* (as the signs called photographic prints). The notices in the bedrooms of the Gran Hotel Bolivar listed among the Obligaciones del Pasajero, "*Guardar moralidad en general*" and I think we did. The only exception perhaps was when Titania, taking the two small girls to a "vermouth" (the 6.30 p.m. performance) at the movies, was refused admittance; the film (*Reunion in Vienna*) she was told, was *No Recomendable para Señoritas*. As the children had already seen the picture at home, without moral break-

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down, their mother was distressed. Now that I think of it, however, I wonder if our conduct in the matter of the pink tickets was strictly correct? Every few days our friend Señor Gomez from the steamship office would lay in our hands a sheaf of pink meal tickets. These stated that the bearer, "Grace Tourist," was good for a meal at any one of various hostelries. Now at our hotel there was a vast table d'hôte dining room on the main floor which was cold, pale, and tardy of service; the food was (if I may be frank) uninspired—except the ever-delicious *palta*, a kind of alligator pear, and the glorious coffee. The roast beef and the cabinet pudding and that sort of thing were rather dreary after our exciting meals aboard ship. I believe some sort of waiters' strike was in progress, which may have embarrassed the management; at any rate, our attempts to elicit something as apparently simple as orange juice (*jugo de naranjas*, if you can

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manage those j's) would have caused laughter in a dinosaur. But downstairs in the basement was a little grillroom, with bright lights, and dancing, and meats turning warmly on a spit. Many times did the waiter explain to us that the pink tickets were no good in the grill, only upstairs. We firmly refused to understand. We gradually made the round of the grill's excellent menu, particularly *corbina* (a delicious fish), *lomo de chanco* (loin of pork), *riñones de cordero* (lambs' kidneys) and *cabrito* (little goat), laid a generous tip beside the pink tickets, murmured the prayerbook rubric "collect for Grace," and left the *mozo* to argue it out with the maitre d'hotel. The pleasures of dealing with an unknown language are impossible to exaggerate. I think the children's favorite word on the menu was *panqueque*, which was not hard to guess among the *postres* (excellent term for dessert). But they were disappointed when they ordered *ciruelas*, which

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sound so exotic, and found them the homely prune.

While on so lowly a theme perhaps I can mention Chuquitanta. We had decided, as in France, to stick to bottled water. Knowing that unless one were specific it would probably be carbonated, I tackled the chambermaid. (Incidentally the lack of a brief way of saying *please* is embarrassing to the beginner in Spanish. To say every time *Haga Usted el favor* is too laborious.) My inspiration was *Agua no fff-fft*, which pleased her. She brought bottles of *Chuquitanta sin gaz*, which became as familiar a companion as the old pink-labelled Evian in France. *Chuquitanta*, lovely word, is the name of a mineral spring near Lima; I meant to go and visit it but never got there. It "excites the whole digestive tube." When we went to the horse races I was sorry we were too late for the first one, in which a horse called Chuquitanta had run. I

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would have bet on him. And going up the mountains by train, some days later, the sound of the laboring engine was exactly that, persistently repeated: *Chuquitanta sin gaz, Chuquitanta sin gaz.*

Perlustration

WHAT is it that carries over from one civilization into another? Standing at night in the wide Plaza San Martin in Lima you see the winged foot of Goodyear lit up on one side of the square; and on the other, *Tarzan y su Compañera*. In your morning paper (*El Comercio*) you noticed that the two big serial features were *King Solomon's Mines* and *El Hijo de Tarzan*. As I remember observing in France as long ago as 1924, Tarzan is one of our leading exports. In Lima I enjoyed watching the competition between British and Northamerican goods. The

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English had a head start, but the States are more than holding their own. It has always struck me as odd, by the way, that Macaulay's famous passage about the future traveler from New Zealand viewing the ruins of St. Paul's was long preceded by Horace Walpole's imaginary ruin-hunter who visited London for the same purpose. Walpole's traveler came from Lima; the allusion is in a letter to Sir Horace Mann, 1774.

Of so vivid, complex and surprising a city (its European look and its feeling of antiquity are two immediate impressions) I can't give you any adequate sketch. But join me in a *paseo*, noting what interests us.

As we come downstairs in the Gran Hotel Bolivar we face (as in every prudent hotel) the business desk. It is there that you will pay your bill which will be legally receipted with a revenue stamp engraved by Waterlow & Sons of

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London. There you see the framed menu of this evening's *comida* and note printed on the card that the house was furnished by Waring & Gillow of London. But in the big circular lobby you notice at once a Northamerican touch: a placard of the Rotary Club announcing its weekly luncheons. "Gee, even my throat is dry" it says jocosely; which doesn't seem to make sense. What must the Peruvian hidalgos think, I wondered? Why should anyone's throat be dry in Lima? You stop in the little alcove to buy a pack of those strong and delicious native cigarettes (I recommend the *Incas*) and one of the little boxes of *fosforos* with a picture of a llama standing in front of blue mountains. You go out through a revolving door of most curious shape (made in France) and find yourself alongside a drugstore window. Here also is a suggestion of France: a display of the *Dépuratives Mercier, Pilules de Longue Vie*. They are made in Nice

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and their export, says the label, is strictly forbidden. Can it be that the French, with their well-known caution, do not want other nations to learn this longevitous secret? You are not to be alarmed, the label continues, if the pilules have chromatic effect upon the eliminative functions. Preferring a short life you pass out into the Plaza San Martin.

A traffic sign warns you, *Conserve Su Direcha* (Keep to Your Right). Just behind you are the big handsome trolley cars (made by J. G. Brill, Philadelphia) that run down to Callao. On the corner a moving picture poster hails you with what seems genial intimacy: *Hoy! Norma Shearer & Robert Montgomery*. You notice that almost all the motor cars going by have no radiator caps. At first you wonder if some quality of air or altitude makes the radiators likely to boil over. No; you are told that the metal cap is the favorite booty of the sneak-

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thief. Peru is a land of mineral treasure, and any portable nuggets of metal have particular fascination. This is a recently rebuilt part of the city; its architecture is ornate, suggesting to my eye a seaside resort. Down the handsome boulevard where the trolleys are running are stucco apartment houses, festooned with garlands, curlicues, caryatids. A prosperous Limeño is easy meat for an architect who likes to pour cement into confectionery shapes. A pity, because stucco gadgets soon go shabby in that moist dissolvent air.

Is it really possible, you find yourself asking, that any nation ever really had enough great men and heroes to warrant so many statues? But the monument to General San Martin will please you; it is dignified, well placed and proportioned, and the horse has at least three feet on the ground. Bolivar's horses seem always to have been biped when any sculptors were near. I like the inscription, quoted from the General

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himself: *Hacemos el primer experimento feliz de formar un gobierno independiente cuya consolidacion no cueste lagrimos a la humanidad.* (*Hacemos* = *we are making*. It is not certain whether any government, anywhere, has quite lived up to that fine hope.)

So you are standing in the middle of that great square, trying to get the feel of this new place. The plots of grass are oddly coarse and yellowish, the trees are small; like so many plazas in New York it has evidently been rearranged frequently. But the general lay-out and effect is more graceful than any New York plaza that I can think of. The little semi-circular recessed benches must be pleasant for lounging in warm weather. Also, on a foggy winter night when a general strike is threatened they make inconspicuous posts of rendezvous for little squads of soldiers.

At the luxurious sweet and tea shop on the

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corner of the Avenida Pierola, as in all grocery stores, you will note that the English Quakers Cadbury and Rowntree have grabbed off the best of the candy and chocolate business. In all displays of jams, biscuits, pickles, delicatessen generally, English names are far ahead. Even when Heinz appears it is the British Heinz with "Lemon Curd," a kind of citrus butter which sounds to me fantastically British in taste. Speaking of groceries, they are usually on the corners and will cause you to believe that every street is called *Estanco de la Sal*. They all display that sign just where you would expect the name of the street; but it means they are licensed to sell salt, a government monopoly. In the matter of streets there is plenty of chance for confusion; besides the name of the highway as a whole each block has a baptism of its own, eloquent of the early history of that neighborhood. Take the two delightful channels that run off northerly

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(N. E. really) from Plaza San Martin. Along the Giron de la Union the blocks are called *Boza* (mouth?), *Baquijano* (Bacchanalia?), *La Merced* (Mercy), *Swordmakers*, *Merchants*, *Scriveners*, and *The Palace*. On the Giron Carabaya you find the blocks named *Divorcées*, *Filipinos*, *Cocoa*, *Eating Houses*, *Stairways*, and *Fish-markets*. Stroll along crowded one-way streets, with all the fresh impressionism of ignorance, how fantastic it is. The little shabby taxis go panting by with a squawk of French rubber-bulb horns. The melancholy (and very French-sounding) monotone howl of newsboys. From rooftops, the cackle of geese and cockcrow. From overhead balconies, or within lovely patios, endless phonograph records. Innumerable churches, some beautiful in simplicity, others astonishing with intricate carving. And always, if you look skyward, the *gallinazos* (buzzards) wheeling far above. And you can keep score in your private

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game of reckoning England vs. Northamerica.¹ On Union Street it may be the Victor Talking Machine dog, or the sign *Fuente de Soda* (soda fountain) or even (incredibly) a placard offering Hot Dog. These you score for the U. S. Then you pass a show of Huntley & Palmer's biscuits, or a translation from H. G. Wells in a bookshop window, and Britain evens the tally. Of American writers in Spanish translation the most frequent are Sinclair Lewis, Dos Passos, Waldo Frank, and Orison Swett Marden. You will find whole racks of spurious Sherlock Holmes adventures, published in Buenos Aires; these you cancel out against the paper-bound Tarzans on the news-stands. There is no English-language bookstore in Lima, a city of, at a guess, between three and four hundred thousand population. (No census has been taken in Peru for many years.) Among the Northamerican colony the largest distributor of literature is probably the Book of the Month Club; next after that, Macy's.

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But I meant our *paseo* to take us along one of the big arcades that face the Plaza San Martin on two sides. The northerly corridor is shops and cafés; the one opposite is offices and apartments. At the Japanese and British consulates, on the south side, the official flags are halfmast for the death of President Hindenburg. Posters announce that the national championship in basketball is about to be decided; that *Voltaire* is a *Super-Produccion de Warner Bros*; that patriotic investors will subscribe for the new dry-dock at Callao. There are little brass plates identifying Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer del Peru, Touring Club Peruano, Canadian Government Trade Commissioner, Attaché Commercial de France, Federation Peruana de Box. Billboards inform us that somewhere in the city are amusement places called Coney-Island and Luna Park. Then, as we pass into more informal streets, political argument grows franker. Near the University is

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a large illustrated one-sheet. It shows a snake with two heads; and the legend: *El Apra y el Comunismo son las dos cabezas del Monstruo que Amenaza Ahogar a la Republica*. One head has been obliterated; the other is a likeness of Lenin. Propaganda by poster does not get very far; every broadside, of whatever party, is at once defaced by the opponents. When APRA is written up on a wall someone is always prompt to add a letter and a loop changing it to CABRA, which means goat.

I had looked forward keenly to seeing the University of San Marcos, said to be the oldest in the New World; it was founded in 1551 by Emperor Carlos V, to be a western daughter of ancient Salamanca. "With the same privileges, franchises and liberties as the University of Salamanca" said the original charter of San Marcos. The parallel has been only too true. It was from Salamanca that the distinguished

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Unamuno was purged some years ago. In the case of San Marcos the discipline has been even more drastic: university teaching has been suspended for three years (so I was told) on account of its radical sympathies; and there are soldiers on guard at the gateway. It was odd to pass through those lovely patios with the royal palms, the cloisters of cedar-wood pillars, the ancient wooden stairway with the portrait of Fray Tomás the Dominican monk, the first rector, and see no sign of students. A few professors and assistants were quietly at work, and a librarian was happily recataloguing, but corridors and classrooms were empty. They showed me a new collection of extraordinary Inca relics (including a cog-wheel cut and polished of stone) lately found in Northern Peru, and in our halting conversation I tried to put a cheerful face on the situation. What every savant has always hankered for, I suggested: the ideal happiness for a

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scholar—a university undisturbed by students. They smiled politely, but sadly. It is a grievous thing for learned men, burning with the honorable excitements of thought, when the occupation's gone. And especially among people of Latin vivacity, to repress public discussion is to drive it into dangerous secrecy. There is a melancholy irony in the latest official handbook issued by San Marcos, printed in 1930. "La Universidad goza de autonomía intelectual, pedagógica, administrativa y económica." But it is inconceivable that the oldest college of our Western world can permanently be muzzled. Even from Boeotia rose the snows of Mount Helicon. They showed me the architects' drawings of their future vision, a plan for a Ciudad Universitaria when San Marcos will move from the city to suburban gardens at Magdalena del Mar.

And I shall remember the good contentment

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of the librarian, as he showed me his long shelves of books and ancient records, guiltily happy in perfect leisure to recatalogue and classify without the irrelevant interruption of borrowers. It reminded me somehow of the amusing old statute at Oxford, ordering the annual “perlustration” of the Bodleian Library. Let me quote you the donnish Latin:—

Singulis annis octavo die Novembris in Bibliothecae statum ac conditionem singulatim inquirant Ibi vero clausis foribus (ne quisquam incommode illos interpellat) et secluso Bibliothecario donec accitus fuerit, examinent ecquid diligentiam in omnibus officii sui partibus adhibuerit. Tum exactam librorum rationem deposcant qui vel amissi vel male tractati sunt; omnesque bibliothecae partes ipsi oculis perlustrent, exploraturi utrum omnia secundum statuta fiant et administrentur.

“Every year on the 8th day of November

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they shall individually inquire into the state and condition of the Library . . . where, with the gates locked (lest anyone inconveniently interrupt them) and the Librarian secluded until he is summoned, let them examine whether he has shown diligence in all parts of his office. Then let them demand an exact accounting for books lost or ill-used; and they shall beacon through all parts of the library with their own eyes, to explore whether all things are done and administered according to the statutes.”

What a chance, I was thinking, has the librarian of San Marcos for undisturbed perlustration.

Up the Hill

UP THE hill, they call it; the most effective understatement I know. That's Lima's phrase for crossing the spine of the Andes on the Central Railway of Peru; the highest standard-gauge railroad in the world. I daresay the phrase originated with Henry Meiggs, the New York engineer who planned the road as early as 1868. They tell me he was eccentric, whatever that means. At any rate he was one of the world's great poets and built a rhyme loftier than Lycidas. There's a hill named after him where his railway goes over the top; a hill not far from

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18,000 feet high. Work on the railway was suspended when Peru and Chile went to war in 1879; Meiggs died; but an English company took over and resumed the job in 1890.

I suppose that to young David Griffis of the Grace Line office, who went up with me, it was just another excursion. To me it was the Aristotelian cathartic. It was also the severest disappointment of a life-time: I had unthinkingly made an engagement for the following day with some Peruvian men of letters. I did not know how to break it without seeming rude. Otherwise I could have gone on, crossed the actual summit (the railroad goes to 15,806 feet) and spent the night at Huancayo. We had to turn back at Rio Blanco.

The station in Lima is called *Desamparados*, which means the abandoned or forsaken—named, I guess, for some church or hospital; like the Gare des Invalides in Paris. It is far

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from forsaken when the early morning train pulls out. Workmen, monks, peasants, and Indians of all sorts, a troop of boy scouts off for a camping trip. *Rumbo al Norte* said our tickets, which sounded to me like Dancing All Night. The station is alongside the Rimac river, a small stream in a good deal of a hurry; the train follows the valley. Through cotton fields and fringes of tall lance-plume grasses we clattered briskly toward Chosica, 25 miles from Lima and 2,300 feet higher. Not far below Chosica the coastal fog turns into brilliant sunshine. The little town, Lima's favorite health and pleasure resort, lies in an ecstasy of brightness. After the city mist it seems as though the day had exploded, bursting the world into naked air and light. Steep hills of brown scree rise sharply. Here is a chance for a cup of coffee, or to study the locomotive. I didn't learn where those engines are built: they seemed to me to have an English look. The fluted

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rim of the stack, the red-painted driving rods, the boiler lifted clear of the wheels, were somehow British. At any rate I noticed that the train's plumbing was by John Levick of Birmingham. It ought to please him that his lavatories travel some of the most exciting scenery on earth.

Chosica stands where the Rimac gorge widens out toward the desert plain. By building an easy dam it could add to its charms a beautiful mountain lake. If so I should like to own some hotel property there. It is the gateway of the most appalling scenery I have ever imagined. Gustav Doré could picture it.

At Chosica commuters going down to Lima for the day's business were mounting the opposite train. David introduced me to a delightful señor, humorously warning me to be on my best behavior. That's the *jefe* of the Sección Extranjeria he explained; he has charge of all the foreigners in Peru.

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Above Chosica the valley closes in. You lean over the windowsill, tasting the warm sweet air. As the train climbs steadily higher on great flanks of hill you look down on green valley bottoms dotted with cows, yoked oxen plowing. The Rimac is now a gray and silver torrent. Looking ahead you see no possible way of piercing this unbelievable jumble of slopes and crags. Vast brown shoulders and tawny pinnacles hem us in. Cactus begins to show along the track. Behind a huge bold knob is a white blaze of cloud. The sky is riotously blue. The slopes are brown with dead grass; they look like old doormats or bleached hides. In the rainy season they are misted with delicate green. But now the hills are tawny; deepening to bronze and mauve as the sun climbs. Imagine doormats two miles long tilted in transsecting 45 degree angles, you have an idea of the ravine above Chosica. And these are just foothills.

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At San Bartolomé, about 5,000 feet above sea, is the first switchback, where the engine changes ends. Halfbreed women come aboard with limes to sell. The station is purple with morning glories. The natives are waiting eagerly for the newspaper, *El Comercio*. In thinner air the sun shines with furious dazzle. You notice the sign that *Alturina*, a medicine for mountain sickness, is on sale in the train. More padres keep getting aboard; does that mean bad luck?

The train grooves higher and higher on those vast brown slopes. Far below the stream twists in foam, like scalloped lace. The window, rolling gently on curves, actually overhangs the edge of the slant. The engine begins to puff more vigorously; you wonder if it's a specially heavy train this morning? Across a gulf of space is a huge tan mountain on the other side of the valley. Up a tiny gorge in its face is a faint green streak, a trickle of water. Then, under barren pinnacles,

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you are on your first really alarming bridge, about 600 feet long, over an uncomfortable chasm. "It was wiped out by a cloudburst once," David remarks quietly. This is the Verrugas bridge; which means Pimples. A good name, too, you remark. I suppose you mean gooseflesh, horripilation? No, he says, it was named for some mysterious disease that affected this particular district. But the delightful souvenir booklet printed by the railway hastens to add that "no risk whatsoever is incurred by passengers." No risk from the pimples, that is.

About here, as enormous pyramidal summits deploy above, you discover in yourself a change of mood. At first you had hoped the mountains would continue to get higher and higher. Everywhere else famous peaks had been a little disappointing; never as tall as you expected. So you looked forward from the train window in a passion of excitement; hailed each new outline

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with a cheer. Suddenly you begin to think, well, that'll do, thanks; that's fine; that's high enough. And now, looking past the yellow butterflies, you see what must have spurred Mr. Meiggs and his engineers to fantasies of emulation. The old Inca terraces, ruined but still clearly visible, running in even parallels up and up thousands of feet on those gigantic slopes. Some of them, moist by irrigation, are still green with alfalfa. Here is a mountain perhaps 8,000 feet steep, ledged with perfect terraces clear to the top. Even though you know what you have seen, you scarcely believe your memory.

The valley has somehow come up to meet you again. You slide backward down to the station at Surco, where women offer great bunches of violets, roses, and carnations.

Where engineers get together and talk about interesting jobs, the C. R. P. undoubtedly gets its due of professional acclaim. The gaping pas-

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senger probably first realizes what's going on when approaching one tunnel he happens to look upward, and sees another one immediately above it in the same precipice; or an archway where the river is routed through the cliff so that the train can use its bed. By this time he much prefers tunnels to bridges; under one of the latter he has been shown a mound of debris in the cañon where a runaway engine went over during construction days. But always, when nightmare heights and pea-soup colored abysses become too overpowering, some small familiar thing happens along for comfort. Perhaps it is a group of men blasting rock down in the bed of the stream, building the astonishing new highway which will traverse the cordillera; perhaps a model-T Ford truck pumping up the pass. At the station of Matucana (7,800 feet) women sell meat patties, and the dogs run to and fro under the cars, apparently inspecting the brake shoes. At Matu-

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cana the little plaza had some of those very stylized pine trees which are frequent in Peru—their flat fronds arranged in series of perfect pentagrams, and topped like a Christmas tree with a small five-point star. And there, adding to the Oriental impression, was a herd of llamas with colored ribbons on their ears. The apparently artificial trees were cut black upon a blazing noon sky; behind a little Spanish church rose an incredible peak, brown like velveteen. After Matucana you will probably go into the dining car for an excellent lunch. It helps to take your mind off the scenery which even the reticent C. R. P. booklet admits “now becomes very wild.” It does indeed; I don’t care what you may have read or imagined, the actual sight is stupefying. It is lucky the good Prescott never saw it; he would not have dared describe it if he had. At Tamboraque (close to 10,000 feet) you look cautiously from the lunch table and see workmen

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far above you in mid-air, riding in buckets that slide down cables from the top of the mountain to the smelter in the valley. This sight, as much as the increasing lightness of the air, is likely to make the sensitive passenger call for the oxygen tank. The Bridge of Infiernello (Little Hell) hung between two tunnels would be a grand place to drop Professor Moriarty if he ever revives.

We got off at Rio Blanco, and had half an hour to scramble about, waiting for the down train. Our own went off among a wilderness of cliffs; we could see it grinding above us on two higher levels. This was a cold and desolate spot, with a few flakes of snow in the air and streaks of white on Anapongo, the highest point in sight—perhaps 20,000 feet. Our own top elevation was a little less than 12,000; high enough to make the heart beat noticeably fast. Shortly before the return train a hand-car came racing

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down the track, with a man wrapped to the ears in heavy coat and muffler. One such goes ahead of every downward train, in case a slide of rock may have fallen.

The journey down is fast; we spent much of it on the rear platform with the *brequero*, who sat nonchalantly with one leg swung over the railing intent upon a Lima tabloid paper *La Tribuna*. He was so absorbed in that sheet I was afraid he might forget to clench the brakes on some of those grades; but he always did; the shoes were smoking and glowing hot by the time we reached Tamboraque. I was told that an entirely new set of brake-shoes are put on for every downhill trip; the thick blocks of metal are burned thin in one run from Huancayo to Callao (346 kilometers). It was a mistake to move from the back platform into the 2nd class car. There was a colorful medley of types: a man sharing his seat with a tame parrot; Indian women in

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serapes and patchwork blankets bringing pine-apples and woven baskets down from the jungle; priests, soldiers, and beggars. But there were also insects who scented fresh blood, and long remained as memory of the Hill.

The afternoon light is volleyed straight up that enormous defile. Seen at constantly varying angles as the train comes grooving down, it turns those savage slopes into pigeon-throat changes of copper glow and purple shadow. It gilds impartially the poor relics of an ancient slaughtered civilization and the heroic patience of modern toil. Then, past the smoke of burning brush on the cotton fields and the adobe hovels of the peons; you come back to the thick misty air and blessed level ground of Lima.

“Emotions of the Day”

LOOKING from our hotel windows toward the steep little mountain Cerro San Cristóbal which rises above the city I saw a blurred yellow nimbus shining through the misty dusk. At first I thought it was the rising moon. Then I realized it was the great electric cross on top of the hill. Carleton Beals in his interesting but somewhat intemperate *Fire on the Andes* moodily suggests that this illuminated symbol is the result of conspiracy between the church and the electric light industry. I am too ignorant even to have an opinion, but it is plain that a country as fantastic as

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Peru will probably confirm any theory you bring to it. If your King Charles's head happens to be capitalism, or communism, or sacerdotalism, or the fecundity of primitive art, or whatever, the most exciting evidence is at hand. The bold and simple formalism of the pre-Inca ceramics, the bawdy humor of their obscene grotesques in pottery, the decorative genius of their geometrical and animal designs, will convince you that Peruvian artists are right in forgetting Spanish tradition. Back to the native Indian sources, you cry. Then, in the Torre Tagle palace, built by an early viceroy, an exquisite monument of Castilian luxury and taste and said to be (I well believe it) one of the most perfect Spanish buildings in the Americas, you realize what Spain contributed to this distant colony. You will be startled to see an armed soldier on guard at the front door of a conservative newspaper office (*El Comercio*); then on the magnificent new

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docks at Callao you will reflect that the much abused Profit Motive has its merits. Balanced views are always dull. How satisfying it must be to have some riproaring thesis that answers everything. There can be few cities where all known epochs and ideas jostle so close together; few countries so kaleidoscopic in economy. The paradoxes of Lima move the political theorist to frenzy. “Artificially bloated, economically and geographically unsound, beautified beyond rhyme or reason, divorced from the real Peru,” exclaims Carleton Beals in one of many eloquent passages. “Its future is doubtful,” he adds. But have not these things been said, at one time or another, of every national metropolis? And surely you can’t build a civilization out of primitives alone?

The Torre Tagle Palace is now used as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is likely to be, and with reason, the first place the visitor is shown.

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The tiles from Seville, the arcaded galleries, the ancient woodwork, are beyond praise. In a corner of the courtyard is the old lion-headed balance in which Pizarro weighed the tribute gold of the Incas. The minister himself was absent and with friendly informality the attendants escorted the visitors through the private rooms and allowed two small souvenir-hunting niñas to stamp on slips of paper the official seal of the department of Relaciones Exteriores. One of those impressions is before me now, and I study the *escudo*. It reminds me that the exact name is not Peru but El Peru, *The Peru*, as befits a proud nation. The shield has three emblems: the llama, Pizarro's fig-tree (which still grows, on senile crutches, in the garden of the President's palace) and a horn of plenty spilling golden coins. Any thinking about Peru would have to follow up all three of those suggestions. The llama to symbolize the land itself; the Spanish fig, whose

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fruit may be by now a little sour; and the fiscal horn of commerce, a difficult vessel to pour from. A good many pesetas are likely to stick in the curly twist—as some bondholders had a chance to observe.—The colors of the Peruvian flag, by the way, have historic warrant. I noticed in the archaeological museum that red and white were the only colors used in the old Mochica (pre-Inca) pottery.

To be a complete paradigm perhaps there should also be a religious suggestion on the shield. For Lima, founded as Ciudad de los Reyes, the City of Kings, is now more Ciudad de los Padres. The number of churches and monasteries is incredible; and this also provides the modern historian with lively theses. The only comment I feel competent to make is that the United States, when it adopted its Great Seal (1782) designed a philosophical backside for the medal; I found it once when idling with Noah Webster

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and noted that this important half has never been cut or used. The obverse is familiar enough: the eagle clutching a branch of 13 olives and a sheaf of 13 arrows; the reverse design shows a Supernatural Eye glimmering on top of a pyramid; above, the words *ANNUIT COEPTIS* which after a good deal of hunting I identify as an echo of Virgil's Georgics I, 40. The founding fathers changed Virgil's invocation—*audacibus annue coeptis*, "be favorable to bold beginnings," into a statement of fact; followed in a scroll underneath the design by the hopeful announcement *NOVUS ORDO SECLORUM*. The prudent Jefferson probably thought this too confident as a national slogan.

Walking in a boulevard near the Parque Zoologico I discovered a bust of Cervantes, oddly attractive for having been washed with some blue coloring. No writer of less fantastic gift than

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Don Miguel could deal worthily with the strangeness of Peru, or divine the course of her future. The Peruvian Cervantes has not yet come. She has had delightful writers: I found considerable pleasure in a volume of selections from the tales and legends of Ricardo Palma (1833-1919) whose memory is deeply revered. His volumes of *Tradiciones Peruanas* have preserved and given sentimental polish to many episodes of Colonial history. The editor of my volume says that Peruvian youth will find in the prose of Don Ricardo a Castilian that is “rotundo, jugoso, rico y donosísimo.” Certainly I found in his brief tales of the tragic war with Chile the same charm as in Alphonse Daudet on the Franco-Prussian theme; though it was melancholy to find that same aura of heroic idiocy bred on still another continent. But Ricardo Palma had a right to feel bitter about the Pacific War: his home in the pretty suburb of Miraflores was

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destroyed in the invasion and his manuscripts were lost. He refused tempting offers to move to Buenos Aires as the editor of the famous *Prensa* of that city and stayed in Lima to reorganize the National Library—which had been sacked and used as cavalry barracks by the Chilean troops.

I set out one afternoon meaning to walk to the top of Cerro San Cristóbal, but I must have spent too much time looking at signs. Here's one I found over a bookstore which pleased me:—

Benjamin Franklin ha dicho: Si el hombre vacia en su cabeza el dinero de su bolsa, nadie podrá robár se lo. Gastar dinero en libros es una inversión que siempre rinde un buen interés.

After loitering on the bridge across the Rimac (where it seems a great deal of the town's garbage is simply dumped over the rail into the stony bed of the river) and prowling about the government tobacco factory and a brewery appropriately

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run by Mr. Backus, I found myself in a gardened avenue of geraniums and statues. It was the Alameda de los Descalzos, which I figured out without dictionary must mean Poplar Avenue of the Barefooted. Each of the trees had a little placard affixed, which I thought might give some botanical information. I was surprised to find that these notices also were in a Ben Franklin mood. I copied several:—

Si Ganas Diez Centavos Ahorra Uno.

Escupir en el Suelo es propio de gente sin educación.

El hombre sobrio siempre es respetado.

La civilización de un pueblo se manifiesta por su cultura.

Nothing gives one such a fellow-feeling with a foreign government as when you see it undertaking the universal and difficult job of teaching people to behave themselves. The admonition about spitting, particularly, is rather more

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subtly suggested than one would find it in North America.

The Descalzos, I discovered, were Franciscans: their secluded monastery stands against the redos of the rocky hill tenderly misted with green. It is unexpectedly neighbored by a Revolver Club, and it looked to me as though the steep road up San Cristóbal would take me right into the line of fire; which, as I learned later from young C., was so. And the time by now was due for visitors at tea, so again I retired without reaching a summit. But I was well pacified by glimpses of little cookshops in shabby streets near the river as I came back. In the doorways fritters and coffee are always ready, and skillets of crackling fish. Probably *corbina*, the universal Peruvian favorite; so highly esteemed that all historians tell you the Inca chieftain in Cuzco had bands of runners to hurry the fresh catch up to his table. I was glad to get back to

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the hotel on time, for there was the gilded coach of state—with horses, plumes, hussars, footmen and all the Cinderella trappings—driving up to the door. The new Colombian ambassador, in dress uniform, was returning after paying his respects to the President. The eyes of our niñas, taking tea in the lobby of the hotel, were big with excitement; they maintained that the Ambassador, a friendly and modest gentleman who had been aboard *Santa Maria* with us, had winked gaily at them as he went by. But the secretary, a pink-cheeked *muchacho* whose own important gravity was evidently anxious to himself, did never unbend.

Through the comfortable circular lounge of the Bolivar passes an interesting social panorama. It is cosmopolitan rather than Peruvian, but one who keeps his ears open can learn much. Members of the English and American colony drop in at the Vermouth hour. The Ohio banker with

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his young nieces is back from a visit to the pre-Inca ruins at Pachacamac: he has a notion that he has picked up some more fleas among those burial pits; but he has found a way of fooling them. Before going to bed he puts a ring of shaving soap round his ankles. This, he believes, will prevent them from climbing higher. An engineer from the port works at Callao tells of the beautiful whistling buoys that have just arrived from Stockholm, to mark the new entrance to the harbour. Another has just come down from the copper mines at Cerro de Pasco, still a little deaf from the sudden change in altitude; a banker has returned from Iquitos, the metropolis of the upper Amazon, from where big steamers go downstream more than 2,000 miles and are still in the river. He speaks of the excitements of a journey by mule and Ford car among the mountain gorges, and draws on a sheet of hotel newspaper a little map of the weird route between

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Iquitos and the railhead of the Ferrocarril Central. Why not go by plane? cuts in a Panagra Airways man who has joined the group. He himself is back from Cuzco where he has been superintending the flying of heavy machinery up to mines in the Andes. Pieces of machinery weighing as much as $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons have been carried in less than an hour a journey that would have required 15 days by pack-mule. This reminds me that in the airways office in Lima I saw a rough sketch map made in 1927 by Mr. Harris of the Panagra staff. It gave a tentative picture of what seemed in 1927 the most likely routes and stops—the whole continent considered as practical flying problem; at a time when, as Panagra likes to remember, the equipment in Lima consisted of one plane and a suitcase of spare parts. I urged Mr. Harris to take good care of this historic document; it will be some day as interesting to consider as Pizarro's memoranda

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would be—if the conquistador had been able to write.

So, over pisco sour or tea and cake the conversation runs in many directions. Perhaps Fernandez Soler, lawyer and Yale graduate, impassioned enthusiast of literature and the arts, drops in to talk of the work being done by José Sabogal and his pupils at the School of Fine Arts. Or, if there is no one you know you will sit in a corner pretending to learn some Spanish from the newspaper. If it's Sunday you'll find an excellent supplement in *La Prensa* called *Letras—Arte—Ideas*; in which I remember an admirable article on the Frenchman Mauriac and a continuing series of fine photographs illustrating Artistic Treasures of Peru. I also saved from one of the papers a brief and graceful little story about a dinner of homage given by friends to the poet José Galvez, dean of the faculty of letters at San Marcos, a disciple of Ricardo Palma and

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himself now Peru's laureate. The article, with its pleasant allusions to *la misión poetica*, seemed characteristic of the Latin good manners toward the world of the arts. I was lucky enough to meet Dr. Galvez later, and though our communication was restricted to indifferent French he is a man whom to see is to love; the honor and dignity of the poet transpire even where words are at a loss. Supposing that it's Sunday most of the people in the lounge have come from the horse races and after standing about making bets in that chilly drizzle are glad of hot tea. The niñas were given 5 soles (the *sol*, a beautiful big silver cartwheel, is worth about 24 cents at existing exchange) and under the kindly tutelage of Sr. Lemon Pie they profited well. As did also our Señora, but the males of the family were losers. The niñas, enjoying the thoroughly feminine mystery of gambling, seesawed in financial zigzags; they also made side bets

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between themselves and a handful of centavos went constantly to and fro. As their mother remarked, it was a transmigration of soles.

An advertisement always advised "Complete the emotions of the day by visiting the Canodrome." The canodrome is where they hold the *carreras de galgos* or greyhound races. We went there too, surprised to find the yelping kennels immediately behind some of the wealthiest and most imposing residences of the city. I wonder if I am wrong in thinking that people of Latin blood are less irritable than the Anglo-Saxon to the clamor of animals and poultry?

Unless you're drinking and dancing you go to bed fairly early in Lima winter, to keep warm. In my own case I always completed the emotions of the day by pulling a Waring & Gillow arm-chair into our bathroom (not to keep Titania awake with a light), putting on an overcoat, and sitting chastely among white tile to read Somer-

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set Maugham. After seeing so much one only half understands, how pleasantly effortless is the native tongue; particularly in the superb readability of Mr. Maugham's tales. It was the big omnibus volume called *East and West*, and somehow it seemed appropriate to those exotic tales that I paused now and then to chivy a few Andean parasites on my own person.

Human Geography

I_N A window in the Chrysler Building on Lexington Avenue is an aerial photograph of Misti, the sacred mountain at Arequipa. It isn't explained or identified in any way, but I'm sure it's the beautiful snow-tipped cone of Misti—which I haven't seen but of which one hears so much; it comes to be a symbol of all that is most beautiful in Peru. The nearest I got to Misti was a little garden café called La Mistiana, in a suburb of Lima. It is so named with intent; this is a *picantería*, specializing in sharp sauces and dishes à la Arequipeña. You eat in trellised and

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vine-grown summerhouses; there is a booth with guitar and piano for dancing; while waiting for the meal you play *sapo*. Sapo means toad: you try to toss brass discs into the mouth of a big bronze toad; missing the mark there are also various numbered pockets into which the counter may fall. Dr. José Galvez, poet and novelist, wrote down for me the names of the dishes. Most important was *chicha*, a kind of beer brewed from *maiz* (corn); the great national drink of Peru. It is served in very large glasses and tastes not unlike cider. (*Chicha y sapo* is the Peruvian equivalent for "beer and skittles.") The first dish was *choclo con queso*—corn on the cob with cheese. *Ocopa* was potatoes with a very strong pungent sauce. Then *locro con arroz*. *Arroz* is rice; *locro*, an Inca specialty, is potatoes and pumpkins with peppers. I see *chupe à la Arequipaña* noted: was *chupe* another of those incredibly nipping condiments? *Anticuchos* were

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hearts on a skewer, a platter almost alarmingly carnal. All these dishes, Dr. Galvez explained, were genuine Inca tradition; it was an *almuerzo archeologico*. He was greatly pleased with the idea of the Three Hours for Lunch Club. We will form a branch in Peru, he said

Past the impressive statue of Manco Capac (first king of the Incas), through fields of corn and cotton, along a fine new toll-road toward the mountains, then you turn off over rough gullies and a rickety trestle to the ruins of Cajamarquilla. The car splashes through a stream where castor oil bushes grow: these are pointed out to the niñas as a thrill of sentiment. The fog-bank of Lima is far behind; we are in a blaze of clear sun, air that tastes like the uplands of Burgundy. Row on row of huge brown hills, sharply profiled in the strong light, spread out in echelon each side of the valley, like wings of scenery on a

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stage. There was a great city here long before Lima; perhaps before the Incas. Some slip of hillside, I think, changed the course of the Rimac River, and it was abandoned. The buzzards are still faithful. On a jut of the nearest mountain the old Indian watch-tower is clear on sky; the little brown path they trod up to it zigzags the hillside where brown rubble is softly powdered with green.

In a daze of empty curiosity you wander the maze of broken mud walls and mounds. Mr. L.P., the sagacious guide, takes post on a commanding summit lest any of his charges fall through into an unsuspected pit. The friable soil, dry and treacherous, is honey-combed with deep graves and grained with specks of gold. The niñas, collecting this sparkling sand in match-boxes, believe their fortune is made. In the open burial chambers are shreds of mummy-cloth, figured cheeks of pottery, bones everywhere. The

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leg bones, desiccated flesh and sinew still adhering, are bent; the dead were set upright with knees tucked under chin. A sandy shelf above the old river bed is scattered with skulls and thighs. Under that antiseptic flood of sunlight, on the sandy bottom of an ocean of elapse, any sense of sacrilege is cauterized. I took two excellent teeth from an Inca jawbone as a curiosity for my dentist. But Newton's Third Law still operates: for he tells me I have to lose two of my own.

Another Inca* city, even more impressive, is Pachacamac, south of Lima. Through Miraflores, *pintoresco pueblecito* with its lovely gardens and bougainvilleas, through Chorrillos with its

*I must explain, to forestall bickering archæologists, that Pachacamac, religious center of the early Coast peoples, is not "Inca" but pre-Inca in origin by many centuries. The period of the Incas (the word seems to mean King or Ruler) strictly speaking began about 1000 A.D. But after hearing confusedly of the various pre-Inca cultures—Aymara, Quechua, Chavin, Nasca, Chimú, etc.—the casual visitor simplifies the whole matter by calling "Inca" all pre-Spanish relics.

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bold hill El Morro (*Morro* seems to mean much the same as Golgotha: a place shaped like a skull; a name of ill omen), then you pass among wide flat fields, steep sand dunes inland and the ocean surf bursting high on the right. The road, clayey and greasy, had a *patina* on it, said the driver; there was a constant impulse to beg him to drive *despacio*. An excellent word which you will need: it means dispassionately.

Pachacamac is also a space of brown desolation; on a hilltop above a river valley is a relic of old sanctity, the Temple of the Sun. Here Pizarro and his high pressure salesmen violated the innermost shrine for its jewels. At the top of a great flight of stone steps some humorist had placed a sardonic skull; but skulls and skeletons are commonplace by this time. Here are not just adobe walls but blocks of well cut stone, still showing patterns in red pigment. Under the brow of the hill, facing the sea, are a row of smoke

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blackened niches, where torches burned as light for Inca seamen. From below comes the even vibration of the huge Pacific surf, beating dull in the ears like the metronome of Time itself. Then, as you grope about in this wreckage of an unimaginable world, another steady pulse from overhead: the southbound Panagra plane.

On the sand dunes cactus plants have been arranged to spell the word APRA. Returning toward Lima you notice a signboard: *Peru Dry Ginger Ale*.

Taking tea at Chorrillos with Peruvian friends. Our kind hostess spoke no English but we filled in gaps of conversation by admiring her baby. He is only a small infant, she said, courteously deprecating our homage. I got half way through a reply but stuck there. I wished to say that in Northamerica we say of every male child, some day he may be President. "Today he is very

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small." I remarked, "but . . ." Then I was stumped for the future subjunctive of the verb. *Hoy está chiquito*, I said, *perro* . . . and kept repeating the *perro*, gesturing at the infant and trying to hold the mother's attention while I searched for the rest of my idiotic sentence. *Perro*, I reiterated, gazing earnestly on the babe in arms; and saw her handsome eyes darken with trouble. Her husband screamed with mirth and came to our rescue. The word for but is *pero*; *perro* means *dog*.

Lima is not Peru, they keep telling you; you are constantly reproached for seeing nothing else; but the traveler could spend a busy month in the City of Kings and not exhaust its riches. I dare not even attempt to describe a place like the monastery of San Francisco (which is not easy to get into) with its beautiful two-storey cloister, its crypts and old bell-towers cracked

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by earthquake. A young colored monk in a brown robe, with all the smiling kindness of his race, took me through the marvellous old building; if I could have known his genealogy I should understand more of the history of South America. Nowhere on our Northern continent, and rarely in Europe, have I seen so impressive a relic of ancient pieties; been so aware of an atmosphere that denies the standards of life outside. I wondered if there were some disdainful symbolism in the great monkey-face knockers on the doors of the church. Did some old abbot wish to confront the intrusive world with the image of its own chattering face?

Quite a different phase of Lima's religious life is a church I visited during Sunday morning service. How beautiful are the Indian peasant women, crossing their foreheads with holy water, kneeling in those tinsel shrines. Standing in a dark corner, motionless and with downcast head,

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was a ragged bearded fellow oddly messianic in look. Sellers of flowers and lottery tickets crowded the doorway in true scriptural fashion; across the street were polished streamline Chryslers. Small boys pass through the congregation handing out copies of the *Accion Catolica Peruana*, urging support of the campaign *contra las peliculas inmorales*. An advertisement in the same paper urges ladies who are truly Christian to wear in church a fine silk mantilla and not "*sombreros de moda, mas o menos estrafalario*." In the church of Santo Domingo, built strong as a fortress against earthquake, I sat one afternoon for a quiet half hour. Dark figures were praying in the lighted alcoves. A guttering candle suddenly flared up in a smoky streamer of flame. The colored sexton came running and prevented a blaze; the kneeling figures never stirred. In the robing room of the Augustinian convent (*convento* does not mean, as it seems to with us,

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women only) you will see the lace vestments all laid out for wearing; the beautiful carved ceiling; fluted pilgrim cockleshells over the doors. In the dim light is a strange wooden statue of Death aiming a bow and arrow. The legend is that the sculptor, after finishing his work, went out to celebrate. He returned late and in good cheer, his masterpiece for the moment forgotten. As he lit a candle the skeleton seemed to spring at him from the darkness, with missile poised for release. He fell dead of heart failure.

Homage to Lima, however imperfect, must mention the notable work being done at the quiet School of Fine Arts where José Sabogal is director. He and his pupils Julia Codesido and Camilo Blas are leading Peruvian painters back toward their native material; who see thrilling decorative pattern in their own landscapes and customs. Sabogal showed me one of his own

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paintings in which three blanketed Indian women, spinning as they walked, had fallen into an unconscious dance pattern of perfect balanced flow. One of Julia Codesido's canvases, an Indian nude, suggests in the sullen brooding face and full fecund body something of the soul of the land. The more minutely studied pictures by the brilliant young Camilo Blas, showing country tasks and festivals, are of remarkable humor and charm. His is a brush destined for great things. Señor Sabogal, to whom Carleton Beals has paid well deserved tribute in *Fire on the Andes*, deals in powerful and sweeping effects; broad, even impatient, suggestion. Like all fine teachers he has encouraged his pupils to develop their own technique, and where they surpass him in skill none is more pleased than he. Sabogal studied in Spain and France; he was also in Mexico during the early days of her great painters' renaissance a dozen years ago; he likes

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to remember that Mexico and Peru have had parallel history in many ways. The canvases he showed me prophesy a new Peruvian feeling both strong and subtle, and proudly its own. I wish the Grace Line would bring up a roomfull of these paintings and put them on show in New York.

Always a lover of college catalogues, I hunted out the curriculum of a student at San Marcos who is pursuing the Bachillerato en Letras. The required courses are:—*First Year*: Ancient and Medieval History; History of Peru; Review and Completion of Castilian; Anatomy and Physiology; Castilian Literature; one foreign language. *Second Year*: Modern and Contemporary History; Psychology; Ethics; Sociology; Review of Mathematics; one foreign language. *Third Year*: Logic; History of Ancient Literature; Human Geography Applied to Peru;

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Philosophy of Education; General Literature; History of Modern Literature.

If the student proceeds to the Doctorate in Letters he has one more year, requiring: Aesthetics; American and Peruvian Literature; Special Course in Castilian; History of Castilian Literature; History of Art; German.

What interests me specially in this admirable schedule is the necessity of the literary student brushing up his mathematics; since we are more and more beginning to perceive that some notion of mathematical processes is fundamental to all imaginative thought; and the fact that English is purely optional. Also I'd like to know more about the course in Human Geography.

I gathered the impression, perhaps inaccurate, that the government would gladly reopen the university if it promises to be good: not to be anti-clerical, not speculate too briskly on economic and political themes. But a university

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worthy the name does not relish these restrictions. I suppose that was what was meant by a little handbill I saw somewhere:—*Abajo la contra reforma Universitaria!*

Perhaps these too casual memoranda are tedious; but scraps of affiche and accidental glimpses are all a part of the Geografía Humana. And how much I omit that I would gladly remember. The shrill whistle of the knifegrinder under our windows that waked us every morning; that soft English-tasting air, *muy suave*; the pelicans in the harbor at Callao. It was fun to chase them in a launch, to see what ungainly effort the heavy birds make to lift themselves off the water; like an author beginning to write a story. The little coffee saloon beloved by our friend L. P., at the corner of Camana and Arequipa Streets in case you're in that neighborhood; where you get the supreme Chanchamayo

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coffee. If you want to spend a whole evening over coffee, and it's worth it, you take one of the little private compartments, *salons para familias*. (No one knows anything about coffee until he's visited South America.) Or the beautiful Parque Reserva with its tile fountains and benches, box trees trimmed in the shapes of Inca pottery, the pergola draped with purple bougainvillea. Mysterious glimpses seen on the streets at night: a little old woman wearing a mantilla, smoking a cigarette, going along muttering to herself. And once as I paused on a lonely street to reconnoiter my way, I found with a start a man standing silently just behind me, withdrawn into a shadowy doorway. On his face was a black mask. I wonder for whom he was waiting? After that I kept more in the region where those smart and very efficient looking policemen stand watchfully in quiet angles.

Shrunkened Heads

I VALUE our last evening in Lima for its sensation of quiet suspense. Taxicabs were on strike, and we were told that a general walk-out was threatened. Many private cars had ingeniously fixed whisk-brushes in front of the tires to sweep away tacks scattered in the streets. Mounted police were posted along the southern arcade of Plaza San Martin. A Peruvian friend had promised to go with me to the Herrero Museum, but while we were lunching he received a hurry call to lend a hand with a speech in Spanish to be

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delivered that night by the departing Chinese Minister—who was also sailing next day. As one of the most popular and successful envoys in Lima, His Excellency had had to spend his last fortnight in continuous feast and speechmaking; obviously it was impossible for him to prepare all these valedictories himself, and in various languages.

Did you know, I remarked to my friend, I also once wrote some translations from the Chinese?

True, he said; I have some of them in a book. (He is a man of fantastically wide reading.) I hope your Chinese is better than your Spanish. They are brief apothegms and parables, aren't they?

That was their aspiration, I said.

Excellent, he continued; the Minister must be running out of material by now; I think he would be pleased to quote one of your translations in his speech. Which one would you suggest?

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So you may imagine my pleasure to find my sententious (and imaginary) Old Mandarin duly quoted, and very apropos, as an ancient Chinese sage, in next morning's report of the official address. In pleasant conversation with His Excellency aboard *Santa Maria* I never quite ventured to confess the innocent interpolation. If he ever hears of it, I plead forgiveness; it was the Old Mandarin's only actual intrusion into the high life he occasionally mentions with such spurious familiarity.

I spent that afternoon among mummies and pottery at the museum, a long way sundered from political disturbance; but I noted that two radical newspaper offices were closed that day by the government; the hotel lounge was unusually quiet at tea time; and I remember thinking, in my evening walk around the Plaza, that all those paving stones piled up for alterations would make very damaging missiles. Meanwhile Señora

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and niñas were spending their modest horse-race winnings in a few souvenirs. (No one can resist those little ashtrays hammered out of a silver *sol* and with a tiny llama on them; though some dour economist insisted that they are made in Germany.) With the dull sportspoiling instinct of paterfamilias I insisted that these young creatures must keep accurate inventory for the U. S. Customs. I wonder if Blythe will forgive me for publishing her Peruvian expense account; the day may come when she will be amused to remember it:—

Souvenires

Postcards	(Soles)	.50
1 gourd box		1.00
1 silver llama		3.00
Stamps etc.		3.50
1 bow & arrow		3.00
anonymous objects		5.00

Peruvian money 16.00
(American, \$4)

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The word llama (which I remind you to pronounce *yama*) had now become such an old friend that young Helen remarked, "When we get home we'll call Lloyd's Neck, Yoyd's Neck."

And so by launch, among pelicans and guano birds and even a thrilling seal, past the Peruvian navy (why should they spend money on submarines? I'd rather see the same amount go to repair the monastery of San Francisco) to our old friend *Santa Maria*. She has been all the way to Valpo and back while we were ashore. She's loading slabs of Cerro de Pasco copper from lighters rearing in the swell. We are to make an additional port, we learn with delight—Huacho, 80 miles or so up the coast, to take on cotton.

But I spare you a recapitulation of the northward run; as delightful in every way as the trip down, in reverse sequence. It was true to type of all happy voyages. There were the two ram-

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bling Harvard boys who made us very envious of their trip among the Chilean lakes. There was the Frenchman with a giant Schnauzer who spent most of his time sunning on the topside and who charmingly said to the children, apropos the dog: "Call his name if you want him to be good friend and frequent you." It was wondered why the animal was so morbidly hungry until a stowaway was discovered in a lifeboat adjoining the kennel; he had been eating the dog's meals. There was also a big yellow and black iguana tethered near the funnel; a very unhappy beast except when the sun was really hot; his ornamental frill drooped sadly. Another gentleman and I, who watched him for some time, found some analogy between this iguana, certain types of business man, and the N.R.A. It pleased us very much at the time but I perceive that I have forgotten just how the fancy worked out. Flying three foreign flags—Great Britain, Colombia, and

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China—for the three envoys on board, *Santa Maria* came gaily up the coast. We were back to sunshine and summer; to deck tennis and Planters' Punch. In the Canal we met the trim U.S.S. *Concord*; I noticed someone toss something overboard from her and thought it hardly good manners in that well-groomed channel. But it was nothing warlike: a small cardboard ice-cream spoon. At Balboa a comely New Zealand lady joined us from the beautiful Australian liner *Rangatiki*. She was inclined to condescend toward our less glittering decor and routine. This was her first trip to the States; and she asked, in happy seriousness, whether we could go all the way to New York by canal. This pleased the Harvard boys, who tried to prove to her that *Santa Maria* is just as genial a ship as any old *Rangatiki*; and they must have got on well, for she soon nicknamed one of them Tarzan. —In Cristobal I saw sadly that the May issue of

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Todamérica—"the magazine for people who think"—was still unpurchased.

Two scenes stand out in mind. One, loading bananas in the dusk at Guayaquil. The mountains are fading blue in the distance; Chimborazo still hidden behind a golden veil;* the three nuns in black at their endless orisons on the bench beside the putting carpet. The bananas show calcium green in the failing light. At each side of *Santa Maria* a floating village has sprung up, big rafts on which schooners unload the stems of fruit; thence up the rattling conveyor. In the bow of one schooner brown men naked to the waist are holding pans of supper while others are still passing branches of bananas from the hold. Under the gunwale of the raft someone has hidden a fallen stem. We have taken on 25,000 stems

*The Harvard boys insist that they suddenly saw, for the subdivision of an instant, a mystic floating triangle of pure silver glory, high in the softening absolute; above reason and belief; pure Santayana. It was definitely Tops, they said

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and are in a hurry for the turning tide. The big conveyor is swung back aboard the lighter. Everything seems clear. But someone on the tug *Chan Chan* is bereft of his burro, which seems to mean what we would call a sawbuck. *Burro burro!* he calls plaintively. "Go on beat it and never mind your burro," cries a harassed sub-officer. The engine room telegraph clangs, *Chan Chan* sheers off, we are away down river.

The other scene, the night after leaving Cristobal. The end of August is hurricane season and everything is well battened down, in case. After dinner, a breezy night of full moon, I went up on the silence deck. Somewhere on the Halifax-to-Hispaniola chart I remember seeing a place marked Tongue of the Ocean; perhaps we have near there, for the flow of palaver down below had been enormous. Now the movies were squawking aft, everyone watching *Shadows of Sing Sing*. But on top of the wheelhouse, by the

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lighted extra binnacle (we were steering course 32°) were other and more lovely shadows. Thin cottony fleeces drifted close above us, obscuring the moon; we travelled briefly in dim grey; then, in new brightness, great continents of lofty cloud, a dull unluclid white for which there is no word; fantastically piled and shaped—just such clouds as must have been seen by Shakespeare's sailors in *The Tempest*. The breeze bore so strong one gripped the rail for comfort; perhaps the tail of the rumored hurricane would curve our way? Then a new and momentarily successful system at roulette turned one's mind away from weather. At 1.15 a.m., drawn in hot gold across the milky sky, one shooting star.

Through its appointed phases the voyage drew toward port. The usual empty bottle (an Undurraga flask) was put over at $31^{\circ} 28' \text{ N.}, 74^{\circ} 10' \text{ W.}$, with offer of large reward if the message

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is returned to Soandso (an unsuspecting friend ashore). As usual, after the masquerade party, someone had to dive in costume into the swimming pool; I wish I had thought to take off my glasses first. You've got no idea how hard it is to find a pair of glasses in the dark at the bottom of a deep tank.

The New Zealand lady had been warned of the magnificent heat she would find in New York. So it was amusing to come up the river in squalls of bitterly cold rain, weather more freakish than anything we had known in Peru. I saw a South American señor looking puzzled at the odd names of passing craft. The *American Farmer*, the *Seatrain* (loaded with freight cars), the tug *Dalzell Ace*; similar names in Spanish would puzzle me. He was hopefully clutching a newspaper that had been handed him at Quarantine. A pink paster on it said "WELCOME TO U. S. A. For *All* News of *All* Lands Read NEW

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YORK AMERICAN." As we huddled into overcoats and hid new Panama hats from the chilly showers I noticed on the wet newspaper a printed forecast. "Today Fair, no change in temperature." The Weather Man's honeymoon was over.

When you get home, the first thing to do is hasten down to the post office to see what mail has arrived in your absence. There may even have been a check or two. As I made for the familiar lock-box in a Long Island p. o. the young assistant called out, in a voice of urgency, "Don't touch that box." I paused in surprise, my hand on the combination knobs.

"There's a loaded gun in that box," he said.

Surprising greeting to one coming back, as he thought, from wild lands to civilization.

"Not exactly a loaded gun," he then explained, "but I rigged up a blank cartridge on a trigger

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so it'll go off when anyone opens the box. While you were away someone must have figured out your combination and has been stealing your mail. I kind of thought you weren't getting as much mail as usual; and then people found envelopes addressed to you scattered all round the village. It's probably been going on quite a while. I had to yell at you because I didn't want the thing to go off and scare you to death."

So that may (or may not) excuse me if a good many letters went unanswered last summer. Neither the postal inspectors nor the local detectives seemed to worry much about the matter when I mentioned it to them. And if anyone *did* send me any checks about that time, which never got deposited. . . . I only allude to it here because it relaxes the suspense which has bothered you since the very first chapter. That, of course, was why we didn't get the letter before sailing, and had that expensive telephone call

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on the pier. Which I'm going to deduct from my income tax.

When you come to think of it, how many loaded guns, of all sorts, are pointed at one in the mail.

On the way from Roslyn to Port Washington, past a favorite avenue of trees, there's a yellowish pile of stone and rubble, rising from a field, that looks not unlike a bit of Inca ruin. Blythe and I pass it on those mornings when I'm allowed to drive her to school, and it always reminds us of Chan Chan, Cajamarquilla, and Pachacamac; reminds us also how little we really know of those great lands we touched at. But it's excellent (we agree together) to know even a smattering of other countries so that you can be reminded of them with affection and amusement. There's another thought too that I've kept to myself. I remember the two gruesome shrunken

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heads, black downy doll-size faces with lips and eyelids stitched shut, that an archaeologist was bringing back from Ecuador. Perhaps the chief value of a trip like this is that it taught some Northamericans also to shrink their heads a little.

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